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THINGS I HAVE SEEN



BY THE SAME AUTHOR

A HISTORY OF THE ART OF WAR IN THE  
MIDDLE AGES, A.D. 378-1485  
ENGLAND BEFORE THE NORMAN CONQUEST  
STUDIES IN THE NAPOLEONIC WARS





C. W. P. Oman





# THINGS I HAVE SEEN

BY

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WITH A PORTRAIT



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# CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	INTRODUCTION . . . . .	I
I.	A GLIMPSE OF NAPOLEON III AND OF FRANCE IN THE LAST DAYS OF THE SECOND EMPIRE, 1868-1870 . . . . .	7
II.	A GLIMPSE OF KAISER WILLIAM I, AUGUST 9, 1881, AND OF THE EARLY YEARS OF THE HOHENZOLLERN EMPIRE . . . . .	24
III.	THE LAST GREAT TRIAL AT WESTMINSTER: BELT v. LAWES, JUNE-JULY AND NOVEMBER 1882 . . . . .	51
IV.	MR. GLADSTONE AT ALL SOULS COLLEGE, JANUARY 29 TO FEBRUARY 8, 1890 . . . .	74
V.	THE LAST CIVIL WAR IN SWITZERLAND, SEPTEMBER 11-12, 1890 . . . . .	98
VI.	A GLIMPSE OF CZAR NICHOLAS II OF RUSSIA, AND THE GREAT REIMS REVIEW, SEPTEMBER 21, 1901 . . . . .	118
VII.	AN ABORTIVE SPANISH INSURRECTION, APRIL 3, 1903 . . . . .	138
VIII.	THE LAST DAYS OF THE MONARCHY IN PORTUGAL. (1.) SEPTEMBER 27 TO OCTOBER 3, 1910 . .	162



CHAPTER	PAGE
IX. THE LAST DAYS OF THE MONARCHY IN PORTUGAL. (II.) OCTOBER 3-5, 1910. THE FALL OF KING MANUEL . . . . .	187
X. SOME GLIMPSES OF WHITEHALL DURING THE GREAT WAR, 1914-1918 . . . . .	217
XI. A GLIMPSE OF GERMANY AFTER THE ARMISTICE, MARCH AND APRIL 1919. THE BRITISH AT COLOGNE . . . . .	238
XII. FASCISTS AND COMMUNISTS IN ITALY, APRIL 1921	260
INDEX . . . . .	285

*The Frontispiece is reproduced from a photograph by F. A. Swaine.*

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## THINGS I HAVE SEEN

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## INTRODUCTION

WHAT is History? When in June 1883 I faced Stubbs, Creighton, and Richard Lodge across the green baize table of the Oxford Examination Schools, it certainly ended at Waterloo for Foreign, and at the Great Reform Bill of 1832 for British affairs. All that followed was 'contemporary events'.

Fifty years have gone by, and it is now quite usual for me to detect those of the younger generation writing down as 'history' lucubrations on matters that to me are not history but 'things seen', and judging at second hand men who to me are well-remembered definite individuals, whom one had studied and sometimes interviewed. Often the verdicts of the present generation seem to me unconvincing. One's own reminiscences of a striking event or a masterful personality often contradict what official historians have stereotyped as the authorized version. On the other hand, I must confess that sometimes in a past decade one was—so to speak—'backing the wrong horse'—that one's contemporary impressions have been entirely falsified by subsequent knowledge. There were times when I thought that the French Republic would not last, that Russia would become a constitutional monarchy, that the doctrine of Free Trade would conquer the whole civilized world, and that Aviation was as wild a dream as the Philosopher's Stone.

I happen to have seen a good many things in the last fifty years, since I passed my final examination at Oxford, and it has occurred to me that it may be per-

missible to put on record one's personal impressions concerning the more interesting of them. I do not think that my memories need be mere 'glimpses of the obvious' to the present generation. For the hopes and fears, the views and prognostications of Victorian and Edwardian days, though so familiar to those who experienced them, are not always easy of realization by those whose back-view only extends to 1914 and the outbreak of the Great War.

I think that I may claim, without vanity, to have been in the position of an intelligent observer of contemporary history from a very early age, and chance gave me exceptionally good opportunities for observation. I come of much-travelled folk on both sides, and was myself moving about in my early days more than most young people. I suppose that few children of the mid-Victorian period were taught to take such a keen interest in contemporary happenings, domestic and foreign. I was brought up, so to speak, on continental travel flavoured by *Punch* and the *Illustrated London News*. My parents and grandparents had been seeing much of the world. On my father's side there were over fifty continuous years of Indian experience. Ten of my relations had been through the awful crisis of the Mutiny of 1857-58; I was reared on tales of that cataclysm, which had hardly ended when I myself was born at Mozufferpore in January 1860. For the last ground-swell of the Mutiny lasted into the hot weather of 1859. I was from my earliest days pretty familiar with what the soldier, the civilian, and the planter (not forgetting their wives) thought about India. On the other side I had grandparents who had been racing all over Western Europe in the 1830's and 1840's, and to whom the 'Spanish Marriages', the convulsions of 1848, and the *Coup d'État* of 1852 were actualities. One of my most

curious family possessions is a little diary of travel in Spain and life in Madrid, written by my grandmother when the projected marriage of the unfortunate young Queen Isabella was the talk of all Europe. And the way in which the political earthquake of 1848 affected the Continent happened to have a personal and an unfortunate interest for some of my family. I suppose that an abnormal allowance of the faculty of inquisitiveness, which made me a perpetual questioner of all my relatives as to what they had seen and done, worked in with the natural tendency of the elder generation to tell their stories, when they found an interested and sympathetic, if a very young, listener. It was not every child who wanted to know what family life was like in the 1820's, or of the miseries of travel in a Spanish winter, or of the doings of Thugs and Dacoits in a back district of the Mofussil. I fear that I gloated over 'Resurrection Men' and tiger stories. Moreover, I was an only child, not banished to a nursery, always living in a circle where I was alone among my elders, and taken abroad for endless tours on the Continent.

I must apologize for what may seem like an overgreat intrusion of the personal element, when I explain how it was that, from the earliest days that I can remember, I was always taking notes of what was going on around me, and piling up memories, some of which seem interesting enough, even now, to be worth recalling. Luck had something to do with it: looking back, it seems to have been by merest chance that I happened upon some of the historical scenes which I have strung together in this record of old memories. It so happened that I saw Napoleon III at the end of his glory, and two years later witnessed the march out of his unlucky army in that start for Berlin which was to be so soon arrested. It was even more a matter of hazard that, passing

through Frankfort for a few hours, I saw the old Emperor William I make a state entry into a discontented city, amid silence and glowering faces—with Moltke and Bismarck on each side of him. There was no reason whatever why I should have fallen into the midst of the last and most ridiculous civil war of Switzerland in 1890, or have been caught in 1905 in the midst of a violent insurrection in Madrid, which threatened to turn out King Alfonso a quarter of a century before his time was up, or have actually witnessed the last day of the Portuguese monarchy, in a tumult which I wrongly judged to be far less dangerous than the Madrid rising that I had witnessed seven years before.

Equally by chance I dined with Bethmann-Hollweg a few years before the outbreak of the Great War, and took my measure of him (most erroneously) as a rather conscientious and affable bureaucrat, who was not likely to leave any mark on history. How astounding that he should be doomed to go down to the execrations of posterity with that celebrated 'scrap of paper' pinned to his tail! But the weirdest of all unlikely happenings was that I should have drafted in Whitehall on September 12, 1914, the official communiqué of the battle of the Marne, though I had only been taken into political service a very few days before, and was somehow charged with a task that should have fallen to someone of far greater importance, but for the general chaos into which all things had got in those days of fearful stress.

The last incidents which I shall put on record were equally matters of chance—there was no particular reason why I should have been in Northern Italy precisely in April 1921, and have found myself most uncomfortably placed in the midst of the fighting between the Communists and the newly risen Fascist bands. Still less was it likely that I should have visited Rome pre-

cisely on those two days when Mussolini made his first triumphal entry, and when, much later, he was shot by a mad Irishwoman—after which all the Fascists went mad (as it appeared) in sympathy. But fortune having decreed that I should witness all these scenes, I have ventured to describe them—or at least to give my impressions of them.

All this may seem extremely lacking in interest to those who went through in person any of the episodes of the Great War. I am conscious that those awful years have dwarfed in the eyes of all mankind the incidents of the times that went before, and have made them appear matters of secondary importance. But, after all, there was history being made between 1870 and 1914, though it may have been but the prologue to the great tragedy that was to follow. So I have set forth my string of tales, some of them impressions of matters that had a meaning for the future, others mere odd happenings, 'typical developments', which remained fixed in my memory because of their improbability—even sometimes their absurdity.

My family chance to have been great letter-writers and letter-keepers—a thing not uncommon in Victorian days—and the fact that I was brought up in the habit explains the survival of three generations of correspondence, much of which I turned over when compiling these reminiscences. I found that I had good contemporary records of nearly all these glimpses of the past. The only ones where memory is not assisted by the written word of the time are the first and the fifth—in 1868 I was too young to chronicle impressions: in September 1890 I was on my way home when I ran into a revolution, and did not describe it, because I was due to arrive before any letter could have come to hand in England.





# THINGS I HAVE SEEN

## CHAPTER I

### A GLIMPSE OF NAPOLEON III AND OF FRANCE IN THE LAST DAYS OF THE SECOND EMPIRE

1868-1870

THE first memory of the past of which I have to tell is concerned with France in the last years of Napoleon III. Not that I cannot recollect even earlier things, such as the Austro-Prussian War of 1866, or the Abyssinian Expedition, but these are second-hand memories, from the talk of one's elders or the newspapers. But France in 1868-70 left a real personal impression on the mind of an inquisitive boy with his eyes open—'moving about in worlds not realized', perhaps, but intensely interested in all that he saw; and most especially did my passing glimpse of the Emperor stay recorded.

If I remember aright my parents took me abroad for three or four summer holidays in succession—not very far afield as it looks now, but to Paris, Dieppe, Rouen, Boulogne, Brussels, Antwerp, and such-like familiar places. The contrast between 'home' and 'abroad' was, of course, most surprising, because 'home' meant a quiet green corner of Cheltenham, and 'abroad' meant either the bustle and attractive glitter of Paris, or the *al fresco* life and petty amusements of a *plage*—ices and many-coloured sweets, watching the *petits-chevaux* at the

Casino, tilting at the ring in the merry-go-rounds of the Champs Élysées, and the delightfully unfamiliar cookery of the hotel's table d'hôte.

But the superficial impressions of a boy of eight on the joys of Paris or Dieppe are not the things worth recording. What was really worth noticing, and what I actually noticed, was the contrast between France and England in the way of pageantry, display, and ceremonies. England was, as all of my age will remember, singularly destitute of shows of all kinds: it was the time when Queen Victoria still held herself in melancholy seclusion at Balmoral or Osborne, and when state ceremonies had been cut down to a minimum. Though often in London, I had never seen anything more processional than the rather ineffective celebrations of Shakespeare's Tercentenary, with the planting of a young oak on the slopes of Primrose Hill. The one annual show of Cheltenham was the march-in of the Gloucestershire Yeomanry—very hussar-like in their uniforms, but not in the order which they kept, or the grooming of their chargers.

In France, on the other hand, there seemed to be bands and banners or military display almost every day, for one excuse or another. It was part of the machinery of the Second Empire for keeping the French people interested and amused, and satisfied with the régime which they had ratified by so many plebiscites. One used to meet ceremonies and processions in small places as well as in great ones—congresses of *Orphéonistes* with gorgeous lyres on their standards, or of *Pompieri* with magnificent brass helmets—very military except for their ample waists and their slouching gait. And religious processions were very much in vogue—an anti-clerical Republican Government has stopped most of that in these latter days. But under the Second Empire all the great festivals of the Church were very spectacular,

with choirs and hundreds of little girls in blue sashes, and statues of the Virgin Mary, or other saints, borne aloft. I remember one at Boulogne which greatly vexed my young British soul, for it was a missionary ceremony, with a big banner, 'Priez pour la Conversion de l'Angleterre'—as if England needed any converting!

Then one met local fairs—*Kermesses* or *Foires* with gilt gingerbread, dancing, and performing apes, outvying the fairs on this side of the Channel—which were a dwindling phenomenon in most English small towns in those days. They have mostly ceased to exist in the XXth Century.

But military shows were, of course, by far the most frequent attractions—ranging from the evening march of the buglers of the garrison of a small town down the Grande Rue, sounding the well-known air of the *réveillé*, up to spectacular parades on the Champ de Mars at Paris, and occasional imperial reviews. My parents were indulgent to my taste for military spectacles—and perhaps enjoyed the glitter themselves—at any rate, I saw many of them. The Second Empire seems so far away now that once, when I told an undergraduate that I had seen Napoleon's Imperial Guard drilling in front of the Invalides, the guileful youth (evidently suspicious of my senile memory) asked in apparent innocence whether I could remember Waterloo! Napoleon III has, I fear, vanished from the ken of all save professional historians.

But under the Second Empire the soldier was everywhere, very conspicuous because of his various and multicoloured and sometimes fantastic uniform. There are, I believe, more men under arms in France to-day than there were in 1868—but the dull horizon-blue does not catch the eye as did the scarlet and gold, the plumes and bearskins of the army of Napoleon III.

Paris was, of course, full of every variety of the uniforms of the pampered Imperial Guard—provincial garrisons were much less glaring and variegated. But to walk round the capital with one's young eyes open was to inspect a sort of military museum. By far the most rare and elegant exhibit was the trooper of the *Cent Gardes*—the hundred horsemen in the brightest sky-blue, with cuirass and steel helmet, who formed the escort of the Emperor when he went forth in state. This he very frequently did, though, by the time that I saw him, all state ceremonies were beginning to pall upon him, for he was a failing man both in mind and body.

The bearskins of the grenadiers of the Imperial Guard were a more familiar sight, impressive particularly when seen in mass; but their nether show of scarlet trousers was not so effective as the white breeches and black gaiters of the original *grogards* of Napoleon I. The Zouaves of the Guard, with their floppy, tasselled head-gear and immense baggy breeches, were specially remarkable for the amount of yellow lace upon their absurdly small cut-away jackets. The varieties of cavalry uniform were innumerable: sky-blue lancers with Polish *tchapkas*, green hussars with fur busbies, helmeted blue dragoons, and still more striking cuirassiers with breastplates well polished, towering plumes, and very big boots. What irony to think that all this splendid guard-cavalry was destined to play no part whatever in the great war of 1870—which was not so very far off when I saw it. Shut up in Metz by the inept Bazaine, it was fated to find no opportunity for a single charge, and to surrender tamely at the end of a featureless blockade, after having eaten all its magnificent chargers.

Small boys, however inquisitive, can only see the outward aspect of things, though that outward aspect may be well worth remembering sixty years after. One

knows to-day that the Second Empire was on the crumble when I was studying its attractive exterior. But no one save perhaps some few politicians, I think, understood the fact in England. To the simple tourist the show seemed as impressive as ever, and the Emperor was still the dominating figure in Europe. Bismarck was only just coming into general knowledge as a possible competitor. The 'Man of Mystery', as English journalists loved to call him, was the interesting problem. I was very anxious to see him, expecting to behold something very awe-inspiring—perhaps very sinister.

It so chanced that I had my wish—and got a peep at him from a good point of view, and for many minutes of a summer afternoon. I do not know how the matter was managed, but my parents obtained tickets for a quasi-private little military show in the Tuileries Gardens. The Prince Imperial, then a boy of twelve, was a cadet, and was to drill a company of other cadets of his own age on the gravel in front of the Palace—of course under due supervision of his seniors. The residential part of the Tuileries has now vanished completely. The old historic halls and galleries, where Napoleon and Josephine used to hold their court, formed the fourth and western side of a great square, facing the Arch of the Carrousel. There is now no square here, for after the *pétroleuses* of the Commune burnt out the state apartments in 1871 and left a roofless ruin, the Republican Government removed all the wrecks, and left the fourth side of the old square blank, so that one looks down from the Louvre, across an empty space, right into the long statue-haunted gardens, where once there was a magnificent frontage of building. I suppose the Republic cleared away the Palace on the well-known principle that 'if you burn the nest the birds will never

come back'—which had been used by earlier demolishers of palaces and monasteries. The gardens in front of the Tuileries were edged, as they are still, by a raised terrace, from which there is a good view over the grounds below, and on one part of this terrace, with its back towards the Seine, Napoleon and his Empress and a sufficient attendance of courtiers and ladies sat, looking down on the gravel where the young Prince Imperial carried out his modest manoeuvres with about a hundred of his young contemporaries in their blue uniforms. Since the Imperial party were raised well aloft, I had a very good opportunity of inspecting them from the ranks of the assembled spectators on the flat. What an opportunity of visualizing the 'Man of Mystery'!

There was no doubt in my mind that Napoleon III was a highly suspicious character. My grandmother had explained to me how he protected the Pope, to the horror of all good Protestants, and had foiled the gallant attempt of the red-shirted Garibaldi (adored by all English folk of that generation) in his raid to deliver Rome from Papal tyranny. My uncle, one of the original volunteers of 1859, had told me how all self-respecting Englishmen had been obliged to fly to arms and train themselves, because of the insolent threats from across the Channel. As a consistent reader of *Punch* from my earliest years, I was familiar with representations of the Emperor as Mephistopheles, as a hedgehog bristling with bayonets, as 'the Picker-up of Unconsidered Trifles'—with a black face as Othello or (alternatively) with a sneer as Iago. I was quite prepared to see something very sinister and awe-inspiring.

The result was a disappointment. On that bench overlooking the gravel in front of the Tuileries sat a very tired old gentleman, rather hunched together, and looking decidedly ill. I do not think that I should have

recognized him but for his spiky moustache. He was anything but terrifying in a tall hat and a rather loosely-fitting frock coat. Why he was wearing civilian garments, while watching a quasi-military show, I do not understand—probably because he really hated to be trussed up in a uniform, and chose to regard this as a small family party rather than a review.

Behind him stood the Empress Eugénie, a splendid figure, straight as a dart, and to my young eyes the most beautiful thing that I had ever seen. If my memory serves me aright she was wearing a zebra-striped black-and-white silk dress, with very full skirts—the crinoline was just going out—also a black-and-white bonnet. You may get the general effect by looking at *Punches* of 1868, when this colouring was very fashionable. But it was the way that she wore her clothes, and not the silks themselves, that impressed the beholder, young or old. After having seen fashions change so many times during these last sixty years, one distrusts one's own contemporary conceptions of the beautiful. But I have seen a good many styles more absurd than those of 1868—including the 'bustle', the 'eel-skin', and the grotesque abbreviated skirts of 1928-29.

Be this as it may, the Empress was a commanding figure, and dominated the whole group on the terrace—the Emperor, huddled in his seat, was a very minor show. She appeared extremely satisfied and self-confident as she watched the little manoeuvres below. Her son, the Prince Imperial, a slight nice-looking boy of twelve in his cadet uniform, drilled his little flock with complete success and not a single hitch or hesitation. His mother beamed down upon him. The boys marched off, and the spectators broke up after indulging in a little 'Vive l'Empereur'.



I never saw Napoleon III again, though I happened to be in London when he died, not very far away, four years later. Remembering what a wreck he already was in 1868, it is surprising that he lasted so long, and that the disaster of Sedan did not kill him off at once. Of the Empress I caught one glimpse a quarter of a century after—a black, veiled figure on the railway platform at Chislehurst, quite unrecognizable unless one had been told who she was. What a life! To survive her glories by no less than fifty years! For the first nine of them there was still some hope for the dynasty, while the Prince Imperial lived. But the Zulu assegai that slew him in a wretched scramble in a deserted kraal not only removed all hopes for the Bonapartist faction, but left his mother to lead an objectless existence for another forty years and more! What did she think about in all those weary winters? She survived to see the Great War of 1914-18, and the *revanche* for Sedan, and wrote (or had written for her) some appropriate greetings for the French People after the collapse of Germany. But it was not Napoleon IV who carried back the tricolour to the Rhine.

My parents were much addicted to spending part of the summer holiday season in short trips to France, and so it happened that we were across the Channel in July 1870, and on French soil, when Benedetti had his famous and unhappy Ems interview with the old King William on the 14th of that month, and when on the 19th Napoleon sent his mad declaration of war to Berlin, after having received the reassuring statement from Marshal Leboeuf that his army was ready 'to the last button'. The outbreak of war was a surprise to the English tourist—naturally so, when the English Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs had on July 6th informed his chief that 'with the exception of the trouble

caused by the recent murder of some British subjects in Greece, he had never during his long experience known so great a lull in foreign diplomacy'. A week after this egregious statement war had suddenly blown up—quite as rapidly as it did in the even more fatal July of 1914. Now the Rhine frontier is a very long way from the English Channel, and it did not occur to the British tourist that within a very few weeks the German armies would be in the centre of France, and they themselves in a war zone. Hence they stopped where they were for the most part.

There was, naturally, intense excitement in every corner of France during the days of hurried mobilization—a mobilization so badly managed that the majority of the French regiments went to the front much under strength, without having received all their reservists, and that transport and supply broke down almost at once. But we visitors could not know of this—we only saw the obvious and spectacular side of things, the noise and the bustle, the perpetual stream of newspapers with wild rumours, the blaring of bands with patriotic tunes, and—of course—the most exciting moment of the march out of the garrison to the railway station through dense, cheering crowds, and between houses lavishly beflagged. They were a battalion of *Chasseurs à pied*, not in the normal red-legged uniform of the French line, but in sombre clothing with green and yellow facings, and black glazed shakos with a plume of cocks' feathers. There was an immense hubbub, and a great deal of embracing—whether the crowd was shouting 'À Berlin', as at Paris, I cannot remember: but they were certainly in an optimistic mood, quite free from expectations of sudden evil.

When the troops were gone we visitors settled down to our former habits—bathing, excursions, afternoons

at the Casino—to my own small boy's memory the important thing was that the meals were as good as ever, the sweets no less attractive, and that Neapolitan and Plombière ices had not ceased out of the land. There was a general expectation of victory—that the whole French regular army would be within five weeks either prisoners of war at Sedan, or hopelessly blockaded in Metz, was a thing that no Frenchman could have foreseen. Indeed, I do not think that any ordinary German would have foreseen it either. It required the most incredible mismanagement and stupidity on the part of the French generals to make such a complete *débâcle* possible. We visitors expected to hear of an elaborate campaign on the frontier—probably of that invasion of the Palatinate which was in the mind of the *état-major* when they commenced their attack on Germany by the little push at Saarbrücken, where the poor Prince Imperial got his much-advertised 'Baptism of Fire'.

I remember plaguing my father with the small boy's usual question of 'Who is going to win the war?' He answered, as I think that most Englishmen of the time would have answered, that it was going to be a very bloody business, but that he thought that at the end of the first campaign the 'red-breeches' (I remember his phrase) would have somewhat the better of the 'Sauerkrauts'. We were as far from suspecting as the French themselves that the enemy's organization was such that in the first month of the war he was going to turn almost or quite double the total strength of Napoleon's army on to the frontier, and that the first clash would be so decisive that its disasters could not be repaired. The man in the street, English or French, had not borne in mind the moral of the 'Seven Weeks' War' of 1866—that a military monarchy might be completely

smashed up, and find the enemy at the gates of its capital in less than two months after the commencement of hostilities. If anyone did remember the recent Austro-Prussian struggle, it was only to remark that it was a triumph of the rapid-firing breachloading rifle over an army that was so behind the times as to be using the old slow muzzle-loader. Was it not well known that the *chassepot*, the new French breachloader, was superior in range and accuracy to the Prussian needle-gun, and was not Napoleon's army also equipped with the much-advertised *mitrailleuse*, which was to sweep whole platoons away with a single blast? As a matter of fact the *chassepot* was somewhat more effective than the needle-gun, but not so much as to compensate for a two-to-one inferiority in numbers. And the *mitrailleuse*, the primitive ancestress of the modern machine-gun, was a disappointment throughout the war. But no one could know this before the experiment was tried.

So we on the Channel coast looked for a series of campaigns on both sides of the Rhine, and felt ourselves very far away from the seat of war. I have only two memories of the few weeks before the crash, the one—trivial and incongruous enough—was the sudden cessation of the issue of Dickens's last novel, *Edwin Drood*. My parents had been taking in its monthly parts, as they used to do with others of Dickens's famous series. And the arrival on August 1st of the fifth part of *Edwin Drood*, with the notice that when the author died on June 9th he had left not one word written beyond the next two monthly numbers, so that no more was to be expected, was quite a blow to his numberless admirers. My father had been an occasional contributor to Dickens's famous magazine, *All the Year Round*, in which he wrote the Indian Sketches: and though only ten at the time, I was a confirmed Dickensian, and had

been poring over *Edwin Drood* myself, and making guesses at the solution of the murder mystery. Since 1870 I believe that at least eight attempts to finish off the story have been made by various writers, and that none of them has completely satisfied the intelligent reader, who has, to guide him to the right conclusion, only the enigmatic set of marginal pictures which adorned the blue covers of *Edwin Drood*—I possess the broken set to this day.

The other and far more stressful memory which comes back to me from the early days of August 1870 is that of the curious disorganization evident at the barracks above our hotel. The war-battalion having gone off to Alsace, and the belated reservists having come into the depot in crowds, the stock of uniforms available was ere long exhausted. One saw platoons drilling in which many men were in semi-military costume, some with a blue tunic and a shako, but with brown or grey civilian trousers, others with shako and nether integuments correct, but with a cut-away coat or a blouse in the middle. I even seem to remember a sentry in incomplete and rather soiled fatigue-dress pacing outside his box, where formerly the most irreproachable uniform only had been visible. Evidently Marshal Lebœuf's dictum about the last gaiter-button being ready for the declaration of war did not cover reservists. Oddly enough this memory of 1870 was not vividly recalled to my mind before the autumn of 1914, when our own volunteers for the Great War were for some weeks to be seen drilling in mixed civilian attire—but then *we* did not pretend to be a military monarchy with everything perpetually ready for war—while the French of 1870 *did*.

Wörth and Spicheren were fought and lost on August 6th, Bazaine was shut up in Metz after Gravelotte

on August 18th. Though the Emperor was reorganizing MacMahon's unlucky army at Chalons, and the *mot d'ordre* was *tout peut se réparer*, the English scattered in French health resorts or *plages* could not mistake the signs of the times, and packed up their trunks, or the then popular carpet bag, for prompt retirement. The Channel steamers—can one ever forget those uncomfortable little craft the *Petrel*, the *Wave*, and the *Foam*—were packed day and night with the Briton returning in a rather scared frame of mind from his broken holiday. It felt somewhat as if the bottom had fallen out of a familiar and permanent world-situation, for in its eighteen years of existence the French Empire had become a well-established fact, the axis on which European politics revolved. Seeing its crash, men asked themselves with some dismay what was to come next—perhaps it might be something very unpleasant. I wonder if anyone now remembers a pamphlet that was a best-seller in its day—not so very long after the tragedy of 1870-71—I mean Colonel Chesney's *Battle of Dorking*—a gloomy forecast of the conquest of England by the German army, after the British fleet should have been disabled by a lavish use of that diabolical instrument, the torpedo, which was just beginning to come into vogue.

But of course we who fled from invaded France in the second half of August missed the end of the first act of the war—the surrender of Napoleon III and his last army at Sedan—the *cul-de-sac* into which he had been manœuvred by the ineptitude of his advisers at Paris and the rapid movements of Moltke's encircling columns. After the news of the investment of Metz we had been prepared for more disasters—but not for this ignominious end of an ambitious sovereign and an army with magnificent traditions. The surrender of Sedan

eclipsed all previous surrenders by its magnitude—Ulm was nothing to it in the point of numbers and of strategic importance. But it was to be beaten in mere scale of size only seven weeks later, when Marshal Bazaine hoisted the white flag with 170,000 men at his disposal—a magnificent force of which great part had never had a chance to fight, so gross was the military incapacity of that most wretched man. I believe that the capitulation of Metz still holds the record in history for the size of the army surrendered at one time and on one spot. It even beats Przemyśl in the Great War, when something like 100,000 Austrians were taken.

English public opinion at the opening of the war had been pre-eminently neutral. Napoleon III had always been an object of suspicion, and the outbreak of hostilities seemed to be his responsibility: Bismarck had cleverly manœuvred him into the position of aggressor, being himself eager and quite prepared for the crucial struggle. This, of course, was not known to any Englishmen at the moment, save perhaps to a few diplomats. On the other hand there was little sympathy with Prussia—the man in the street had not forgiven her for the maltreatment of Denmark in 1864, and had looked on the Austro-Prussian conflict of 1866 as a heartless quarrel of robbers over their spoil. I remember a *Punch* cartoon of August 1870 which was labelled, 'Six of one and Half a dozen of the other', and represented Napoleon and King William urging each his guiltlessness, before John Bull, seated as arbiter on a judge's bench. Each sovereign wears on his face an expression of obvious hypocrisy, and is credited in the explanatory letter-press with declarations of the most shameless insincerity. The British people, like the British Government, was all for neutrality, having no sympathy for either combatant; and the only sign of

political interest in the war was our declaration that the international treaty concerning the inviolability of Belgium was still valid, and would be backed by Great Britain against any Power who might trespass over King Leopold's border. Both France and Germany gave (and kept) satisfactory pledges on the subject. It seems odd to remember that the document which was honoured by both parties in 1870 was to become Bethmann-Hollweg's 'scrap of paper' in 1914, and to bring about our instant entrance into the Great War. For I still hold, after hearing many arguments, that the Asquith Cabinet would not have declared war on Germany on August 4, 1914, if the German violation of Belgian neutrality had not taken place. Public opinion would have held them back—I know not for how long. The majority of the ministers were only convinced that the rupture was inevitable when the news of the ultimatum to King Albert and the crossing of the frontier came to hand. That Mr. Winston Churchill and Lord Grey were for more immediate action was undoubtedly the case—but they could not have carried the Cabinet with them save for the open attack on Belgium followed by the German Prime Minister's shameless declaration that necessity overrides solemn pledges.

After the disaster of Sedan, when Napoleon was a prisoner, and his wife and son had escaped almost alone to England—in the charge of the Emperor's American dentist for want of a better escort—when the old régime had been swept away and the Republic had been proclaimed at Paris, English public opinion (as I well remember) took quite a new turn. The general view was that the Empire—a militaristic and aggressive power—having disappeared, peace ought somehow to have been concluded. The German attack had been, as it appeared then, provoked by Napoleon's policy, not



by a wish to humiliate and crush France as a first-class Power, and to take her place as the dominating factor in Europe. English expectations, however, were disappointed: Germany's demands were heavy, and the leaders of the French Republic refused to sue for peace, and opted for the commencement of a perfectly hopeless second war. Gambetta's organization of the national defence, and Jules Ferry's unlucky 'Not a stone of our fortresses, not a yard of our soil', were a magnificent gesture, and saved French self-respect. But from the military point of view the situation was hopeless from the first: it was impossible to beat the best trained and most efficient army in Europe without any nucleus of regular troops to stiffen hordes of newly levied mobiles and national guards. This was obvious in London, but the gallant effort to achieve the impossible commanded sympathy—and the German bombardment of Paris was regarded as an outrage on humanity. In 1870-71 vague humanitarian ideas prevailed everywhere: what the average Englishman of the day would have thought of the war-methods of 1914-18 is easy to conceive. It was the general theory that the civilian must not suffer, since wars were the affair of monarchs, diplomatists, and regular armies. That they were struggles between nations, in which every individual of the nation was involved, no one would have conceded. The land-bombardment or air-bombardment of open non-military towns, the deportation of masses of people of both sexes, the sinking without warning of merchant ships, would have been things inconceivable in 1870. If Clausewitz's grim theory that in war it was permissible to use every method to break the will to resist of an opponent had been generally known, it would have been execrated. Hence the mere fact that the French people were suffering from the ills of

invasion—ills in detail infinitely less horrible than those of 1914-18—was sufficient to turn English public opinion against Germany. There came, however, a revulsion in the spring of 1871, when the senseless and unpatriotic outburst of the Commune, followed by the wanton destruction of so many of the splendid public buildings of Paris and the shooting of the archbishop and other hostages, produced a general impression that the French were a hopeless race, which it took some years to forget.

I chanced to be in Paris in 1873, when the rebuilding of the wrecked city was only just beginning, and shall never forget the impression made by the gaping windows and fallen roofs of the Tuileries, which I could just remember from 1868 as having been a centre of splendour and pageantry. I saw too the ivy and weeds growing in the cracks of the marble mantelpieces of St. Cloud. The latter ruin was the result of German shells, no doubt—but the former the deliberate work of the Communists in their last days of venomous spite. These are memories of one's youth not easily forgotten, and coloured one's conception of France for many a year. As it happened, there was a long gap in my French visits between 1873 and 1880—caused by a series of illnesses in my family, which stopped travel for some years. By 1880 Paris was changed—it was by no means the Paris of 1868, but it was at any rate a splendid city once more, if not the glittering Paris of Napoleon III.

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## CHAPTER II

### A GLIMPSE OF KAISER WILLIAM I AND OF THE EARLY YEARS OF THE HOHENZOLLERN EMPIRE

AUGUST 9, 1881

IT is a fact that causes much musing and reflection that, in common with the elderly folk of one's own generation, one saw both the beginning and the end of the German Empire. I was a school-boy of ten when the united, but in many cases reluctant, princes of Germany saluted William I of Hohenzollern by the title of 'Deutscher Kaiser' in the Galerie des Glaces at Versailles. Aged fifty-eight and a temporary worker in the Foreign Office, I received the telegrams which announced the abdication of William II of Hohenzollern and his rather ignominious flight to Holland. Between January 18, 1871, and November 11, 1918, for nearly forty-eight years, the German Empire had been the dominating factor in European politics. It is curious to reflect that one has watched a period from end to end, and can draw conclusions about it as a finished thing. Few sections of history are so clean-cut and coherent. But the external and political aspect of the period is a thing comparatively easy to visualize: the internal changes of Germany, of which I got glimpses from time to time, have had less written about them, and are to my mind quite as interesting. I did not start my acquaintance with the country so early as I did with France—my first visit was as an undergraduate of

nineteen in 1879—from then to 1912 I was, in two blocks of years, 1879-92 and 1907-13, a pretty frequent passer-by: but there was a long gap between 1892 and 1907, and it was precisely in those fifteen years that the psychological change had taken place which made the Germany of my later visits so curiously unlike the Germany which I remembered from the early 1880's. I felt at once that I was in a different country, and disliked the change immensely. Probably I should not have noted it with such clearness if I had been a yearly visitant, for the transformation no doubt was gradual. But it so chanced that between 1892 and 1907 I had been down in Italy or Spain almost every spring or autumn, and such knowledge as I had been picking up of German affairs was mere newspaper knowledge, which left the essential inwardness of things undiscovered.

In 1892 William II was at the beginning of his reign, and his varying psychology set a series of puzzles to the observer: in 1907 his idiosyncrasies were pretty well known—if they could not always be understood. In the 1880's the Germany that I saw was the Germany of the generation that had witnessed the rise of Bismarck to power, and his victories over his various opponents, domestic and foreign. The elder generation of domestic opponents was still alive and querulous. In 1907 the Germany of Bismarck had become the Germany of William II, and the memory of the Great Minister was mainly recalled in order that critics might contrast the policy of the long-omnipotent Chancellor with that of the Emperor, who made and unmade chancellors at his pleasure—sometimes much to the puzzlement of his subjects.

I had the chance of studying the aspect of all the three Kaisers—William I I only saw once, but it was on a very interesting and critical occasion: Frederick

I watched a good many times, not at moments of crisis, but during his well-earned and unobtrusive holidays. William II no one could help seeing pretty often, since exhibiting himself in striking attitudes was his greatest pleasure: once I saw him do a most unnecessary thing in a most tactless fashion, and give much offence thereby. Of all this more hereafter.

The main impression left on my mind by many short terms of German travel was, as I have already observed, the extraordinary difference between the country as I first knew it and its mental condition just before the outbreak of the Great War. In 1879-80 the Germans, as a whole, had not commenced to 'think imperially'. They were very proud of Sedan and Gravelotte, less proud of some of the consequences of those spirit-stirring victories—of which oleographic pictures adorned every restaurant and many domestic interiors of the humbler sort. Whether military glory and worship of the Hohenzollern dynasty was to be the inspiration of the next period was a very doubtful thing. I saw, in many visits, much more of Southern and Western Germany than of old Prussian regions, though Berlin was certainly visited more than once. Hence my observations were no doubt rather partial, though clear enough so far as they went. They testify to the existence during the early days of the Empire of an absolute detestation of the new régime in wide stretches of the country. The Hohenzollern government was militaristic, centralist, and for a long time fiercely anti-Catholic. Bismarck's *Kulturkampf*, or strife with the Roman hierarchy, went on for ten years, and only ended by a compromise in which he finally toned down most of his original legislation. Though the Catholics had in the end escaped from his clutches, the memory of the struggle was bitter among them when

I first knew Germany. Twenty years later they had become the 'Centre Party' and had drifted away into frequent alliance with the old Prussian Conservatives, because both detested Radicalism and Socialism, which were the coming danger in the eyes of both parties.

But in addition to the bitter dislike of all the Catholics for the Empire, which I well remember evident in a dozen ways, there were hostilities of thought that showed themselves in regions which were by no means Catholic. One can hardly exaggerate the strength of local state-particularism. The break-up of mediaeval Germany into small dynastic states was still leaving a very real trace on the mentality of many millions of Germans. Some of the twenty-four sovereign states which still survived in 1870 were so ridiculously small, and in many cases so scattered about in isolated *enclaves*, that local and dynastic patriotism was not a strong sentiment. But there were others, where the block was sufficiently large, whose recent history had tended for many years to anti-Prussianism, and where the reigning dynasty had still a real popularity with the bulk of its subjects. One must remember that in the Austro-Prussian War of 1866 all the more important minor states had sided with the Hapsburgs, and put their little armies into the field against Prussia. When the Hohenzollerns won, they annexed Hanover, Hesse-Cassel, Nassau, and the old free city of Frankfort-on-Main. This was a geographical and strategical stroke, to put old Prussia in direct contact with its Rhine Provinces. The states which had fought against Bismarck and his master, but were not annexed—Bavaria, Saxony, Wurtemberg—were deeply humiliated, and the defeat still rankled. It will be remembered that Napoleon III so overrated the practical effect of this grudge that he imagined in

1870 that the South German states would stand neutral, or even perhaps join him in an attack on Prussia. That he made a gross miscalculation was due to his own error in allowing his declaration of war to look like a gratuitous insult to the King of Prussia, and to Bismarck's wisdom in pointing out that the French ambition for a Rhine frontier meant the annexation to France of the Bavarian Palatinate, and scraps of the dominions of some of the smaller duchies. The South Germans marched along with the Prussians, and their armies took over even more than their proportional share of the fighting—as shown at Wörth, Sedan, and Orleans.

This did not mean that the mass of them had any love for Bismarck, King William, Hohenzollern bureaucratic or militaristic ideas, or centralism as opposed to particularism. The impulse had been the necessity of acting together with Prussia, in order to prevent the humiliation of Germany, and the annexation by Napoleon III of a large slice of purely German territory, which must inevitably have followed. When Napoleon had gone into ignominious captivity at Wilhelmshöhe, and the French Republic's armies had been definitely crushed in the field, the proclamation of the German Empire looked like a magnificent declaration of victory and unity. But the unity had not been so real as it looked—the eccentric King of Bavaria had secretly protested, and had the sympathy of his own people and of many Germans more. His assent to the scheme was forced upon him by Bismarck—who actually drafted the official letter by which King Louis was made to broach the idea of union to his fellow-princes. The real national enthusiasm for the victory over France disguised many reluctances and murmurings, which only came to the surface when the war was

well over, and the actualities of Prussian predominance were displayed.

One may distinguish three main currents of anti-Prussian and anti-imperialist discontent, which were very visible when I first came to travel around Germany. To the first I have already alluded—the contest between Bismarck and the Roman Catholic hierarchy which raged from 1872 to 1880; it died down in the end because the Chancellor gradually withdrew most of his celebrated ‘May Laws’. But it left a feeling of friction behind it.

The second definite current of discontent, which lasted much longer, was to be seen in the annexed states, whose dynasties Bismarck had expelled in 1866. I had many and most interesting experiences of its reality. Hanover, Hesse, and Nassau were ancient states, their dynasties went back to the early Middle Ages, and were involved in centuries of eventful history. Nassau had once given an emperor to the ‘Holy Roman Empire’, Hesse had produced that Philip ‘the Constant’ who was one of the chief leaders of the militant Protestantism of the Reformation period, and had been the special enemy of the great Charles V. The Guelfs of Hanover had been the dominant power in the old ‘Lower Saxony’ long before they became kings of England—though they had played a lesser part than might have been expected, owing to their insane practice of heritage-partition, which had often led to the Guelf lands being divided between three or four kinsmen. But in no corner of Germany, oddly enough, did I find more bitter reluctance to accept the new Hohenzollern Empire, and all that it implied, than in the smallest, territorially speaking, of Bismarck’s annexations of 1866—the old free city of Frankfort-on-Main. This was a spiteful annexation, not made



for either geographical or military reasons, for Frankfort was not a military power, nor did the sweeping away of its narrow boundaries make the connection between Berlin and the Rhine any easier—that was already secured by the annexation of Hanover and Hesse.

But the free city of Frankfort was destined to destruction because it had been the old political centre of an earlier Germany which knew not Berlin. It had been the spot at which the long line of Holy Roman emperors had been elected, Hapsburgs in an almost unbroken line for the last four centuries: and the memory of the Hapsburg dominance was hateful to Hohenzollerns. But its real offence was that it had, because of its old imperial traditions, been chosen as the meeting-place of the ineffective Diets of the German Confederation that existed from 1815 to 1866, the loose confederacy which Bismarck destroyed, in order that he might build a more compact Prussian Empire on its ruins. In a way it was the capital of Germany—if Germany had a capital. It represented a tradition in which Prussia had no leading part—Austria had generally been predominant in the Diet. And when Austria had been knocked out for a moment in the Revolution of 1848, Frankfort had been the centre of that reformed Liberal Parliament which strove for a space to give federalized Germany a constitutional régime, in which the autocracy of princes should have little part. The Frankfort Parliament collapsed—and German Liberalism with it—but the restored Diet remained anti-Prussian. It actually declared war on Prussia, and backed Austria in the war of 1866.

Hence, perhaps, came the exceptional rigour with which Frankfort was treated during the war of 1866. When the old free city fell into the hands of the Prus-

sians, after the defeat of the *Bund* army at Kissingen, its senators were arrested, its newspapers suppressed, and a war-contribution of 6,000,000 thalers imposed. This levy was afterwards increased to 25,000,000, and the Prussian governor threatened to burn the city if the money was not at once forthcoming. The burgo-master hung himself in despair—but the wealthy banking firms found the funds to settle the enormous fine. By the treaty which ended the 'Seven Weeks War' Frankfort was earmarked for annexation, along with Hanover, Nassau, and Hesse-Cassel. The hypocritical piety of King William's royal message to the Prussian Parliament, announcing the *fait accompli*, was long remembered with resentment. 'The Governments of these states, by rejecting the neutrality offered to them by Prussia, appealed to the arbitrament of war. The issue, by the judgment of God, has gone against them. Political necessity compels us never to restore to them the authority of which they have been deprived by the victories of our arms.' Frankforters refused to recognize the fiat of a Prussian God Almighty as decreeing the forfeiture of their age-long independence. Many of them tried the extraordinary plan of going for a short time to Switzerland and getting themselves naturalized as citizens of the Helvetic Confederation. But Bismarck ended this very technical evasion of personal subjection to Prussian authority, by enacting a law which declared that individuals born in Frankfort, and regularly domiciled there, would be treated as Prussian subjects so long as they resided in the city. Denationalization could only be secured by permanent residence in the state in which the Frankforter purported to have acquired civic rights. Few or none of the pseudo-Swiss really emigrated.

It is no wonder that even fifteen years after the

annexation, in 1881, when I paid my first visit to Frankfort, feeling was very bitter against the Prussians and the Empire. The old free city had ceased to be a sort of capital, haunted by deputies to the *Bund* and diplomats; it had become a mere provincial town, and its garrison was drawn from an alien army. The only importance that remained to it was that of wealth: it was still the centre of great banking interests, as it had been for many a decade, even before the name of Rothschild became famous. And it was a focus of middle-class Liberalism of the old type. The sentiment of the whole population was anti-Prussian and the annexation still rankled. There was a suppressed feeling of resentment even in the petty officials who showed one round the gallery of portraits of the old Holy Roman Emperors, and the municipal buildings which had once been the headquarters of a sovereign state, like Hamburg or Bremen.

The scene which I shall never forget was a very impressive one. In 1880 the Prussian Government thought that the spirit of Frankfort was so far tamed that it would be possible to stage a first-class imperial ceremony and a royal visit. There was such a visit, but the newspapers were wrong in calling it a success: the reception was by officials, the crowds were largely imported. In the following year it was resolved to make a second attempt to impress the city—the excuse was the opening of some public building or other—I cannot remember what; but the old Kaiser William came over from Coblenz on August 9th attended by the great ones of his staff and court.

I was one of a by no means large crowd which watched the imperial cortège pass down a long avenue from the station to the city, between an interminable hedge of bayonets on either side, for the ceremony had the

usual Prussian military effect, though its occasion was a purely civil one. In front in a state carriage drove the old Emperor, just over eighty years of age, but looking extremely hale and hearty: there was a general sitting opposite him. He was rather a genial figure, more like a Father Christmas than a tyrant—but he lacked Father Christmas's ample beard, which was inadequately replaced by bushy whiskers. Certainly he did not give one the impression of an intellectual giant, but rather that of an honest and pious major-general—such as one often saw in Cheltenham or Bath. I cannot help smiling to-day when I think of the way in which German journalists and even German historians kept calling him 'William the Great'. He had certainly been—to make a borrowing from a nickname in another dynasty—'William the Well-served'.

But a horse's length behind the imperial carriage rode the men who had really made the German Empire of 1871—Prince Bismarck and Field-Marshal Moltke. They were the most strangely contrasted figures that could be conceived. Bismarck was enormous—though I think not quite so stout as he came to be a few years later: he required the biggest charger that could be found, and rode like a beer-barrel. A white cuirassier uniform emphasized his prodigious bulk: he looked formidable and rather sulky—which was not to be wondered at, for the ceremony (which no doubt he had planned) was proving a failure. One felt that there was a splendid scolding saved up in his brain for the underlings who had suggested—or perhaps only approved of—the experiment. On the other side rode Field-Marshal Moltke, thin, a little bent, with the aspect of extreme old age, though he was only eighty, three years younger than the evergreen Emperor, if fifteen years older than Bismarck, who was then only

sixty-five. His face was much wrinkled, and his eyes cast down—one could not guess what he was thinking about. Perhaps he was merely tired, perhaps he had given his opinion against the wisdom of the visit.

Behind these two figures rode a large and brilliant staff in many uniforms—I could not identify any of them—princes and generals.

But the one thing that was obvious was that the ceremony was a failure: the Frankforters were not there: the bulk of them were boycotting the show: the very modest crowd was composed only of the lowest classes and of visitors from outside. And—this was the extraordinary phenomenon—there was not a single *Hoch!* raised all along the way, as the notable trio of old men who had made the Empire went by. In all countries, when the chief of the State passes along, one hears the wave of cheering, and sees the brandished hats. Here there was almost absolute silence, no sign of enthusiasm, and a general aspect of apathy. Even the humbler Frankforters who were looking on were glowering at the show, though curiosity had drawn them out to witness it. I believe that at the actual ceremony that followed the attendance was only by State officials, and persons who, for one reason or another, did not dare to refuse their presence.

Though it happened fifty-two years ago, I shall never forget the impression made on one's mind by this ceremony. It resembled more the entry of a conqueror into a captured town than a visit by an established sovereign to a place in his own dominions.

My memories of several visits to Hanover are quite as illustrative of popular detestation for Prussianism as those of Frankfort in 1881. This was a broad land with strong local feeling, full of old military traditions, and with a governing class consisting of a squirearchy

long accustomed to work administration. They were very loyal to the House of Guelf, whose origin went back to the Dark Ages, but they were quite accustomed to manage for themselves under the nominal rule of an absentee master. From 1714 to 1837 the head of the House of Guelf had been a permanent resident in England. George I and George II paid intermittent visits of no long duration to their electorate, but I do not think that George III in all his sixty years of rule ever came to Hanover, though more than one of his sons turned up as his representative. Certainly in 1820-37 George IV and William IV never showed in person—deputing regency to their younger brother Ernest Duke of Cumberland. Practically the Hanoverian State ran itself for a full hundred years under a native bureaucracy and aristocracy, without a resident sovereign—a most odd phenomenon. The personal union to Great Britain caused a certain amount of friction—just as it did in London. British opposition statesmen used to grumble about Hanoverian influence—Hanoverian statesmen thought that they were being dragged into colonial wars purely for British objects. It is strange to find that the main result was an extraordinary *cameraderie* between the British and the Hanoverian armies—who had served side by side, not only at Blenheim and Malplaquet, Dettingen and Minden, but also in America and at Gibraltar, very far from the electoral bounds. It is curious that from 1795 to 1804 George III permitted his Hanoverian subjects to stand out of the War of the French Revolution, when the rest of North Germany withdrew from the struggle, at the time of the Treaty of Basle. But when Napoleon overran the Electorate in 1804, almost the whole of the Hanoverian army, men as well as officers, emigrated soon or late to England, and served King George III as the

famous 'King's German Legion' throughout the latter years of the great French War. It contributed ten battalions of infantry and five regiments of cavalry, of the most steady and reliable sort, to the British army—the majority served in the Peninsular War, and were among Wellington's most trusted troops. When I first went to Hanover almost everybody's father or grandfather had earned the Waterloo medal, and generally the Peninsular medal also. I had some most interesting Peninsular diaries by Hanoverian officers placed at my disposition years afterwards, when I was writing on that period.

When William IV of Great Britain died in 1837, Hanover, where the Guelf family-law prescribed succession by the nearest male heir, passed to Ernest Duke of Cumberland, while Victoria, the daughter of his elder brother, succeeded to the throne of Great Britain. That strange character King Ernest I seems to have been far less unpopular than he was in England, where his name was execrated—as witness the insulting 'Hanover Tokens' which one sometimes finds in a neglected bureau—representing him riding 'to Hell or Hanover', accompanied by a devil. Ernest ruled like most other German princes of his day, on rather autocratic lines, supported by the bureaucracy and the army. Occasionally he granted a constitution, and then tried to make it unworkable: occasionally he lapsed into mild persecution of Liberals—especially the well-known 'Seven Professors' of Göttingen, who were deprived of their chairs for lecturing on the violated constitution.

But Ernest died in 1850, and his successor, the blind King George V, was adored by his people, a mild *pater patriae* who allowed himself to be directed by his ministers. A pathetic and benevolent figure, he com-

manded universal loyalty. When Hanover, like Saxony, Bavaria, and the other monarchical states of Germany took sides with Austria against Prussia in the War of 1866, the governing classes without exception approved the decision. Prussia was the envious and greedy neighbour who for many years had been coveting Hanoverian territory, in order to link up Westphalia with Brandenburg. Everyone remembered how in the old Napoleonic times she had sold her alliance to the French emperor for the possession of the Guelf lands. She did not keep them long—Jena settled that usurpation—but her territorial ambition was still alive, and every Hanoverian knew it.

The War of 1866 brought on the long-expected doom. The proud little Hanoverian army, isolated in the north from all the other allies of Austria, tried to cut its way through Thuringia to join the Bavarians. But it was too far off from its friends; and, intercepted and beset by an ever-increasing superiority of Prussian troops, it was, after some initial successes, completely surrounded and forced to surrender at Langensalza—a sort of miniature Sedan, for the blind king was with his army. Bismarck annexed Hanover with the brutal declaration, which I quoted above, that God Almighty had decided in Prussia's favour, and that Prussia could not tolerate the jealous petty neighbours 'who by reason of their geographical position create embarrassments for us far beyond the measure of their national power'.

There was never a more detested annexation: the Hanoverians refused to consider themselves Prussian subjects. They cut themselves off from their conquerors by a social boycott, like that which the Venetians practised against the Austrians in the days of the Italian *Risorgimento*. None of them would take service



under the usurping Government: the old military families who had formed the core of Hanoverian patriotism sent their sons to get commissions in the Saxon or the Wurtemberg armies. It was considered a desperate insult when the Prussian Government ordered that the new regiments levied from Hanoverian conscripts should bear on their colours the ancient battle-honours—Gibraltar, Garcia Hernandez, Waterloo—which had been won by the old army. The arrogant Prussian lieutenant stalking down the Georg Strasse was the symbol of foreign conquest. I know of houses where, when the younger members of the family had made acquaintance with a Prussian, he had to be met by stealth, without the knowledge of the elder generation.

The political aspect of the boycott was most marked. In the Imperial Parliament, throughout the next generation, the old Hanoverian districts continued to send to Berlin a body of deputies—they were called the Guelf party—whose only object was dynastic protest. They voted against the Government on every and any project, along with the other protest-parties, the Catholic Poles from Posen, the Alsatians, and the single Dane from North Schleswig—there were generally seven of them, and sometimes as many as eleven. Their position was much like that of the irreconcilable Home-Rulers in a British House of Commons. They regarded the third Duke of Cumberland, the son of the blind king, as their lawful sovereign, and were always in correspondence with him in his Austrian place of exile. Bismarck replied by earmarking a sum which he considered to be the indemnity due to the old Royal House for the confiscation of its estates as what he called the 'Reptile Fund'. It got this curious name from his statement that it was to subsidize a secret police 'to

watch the reptiles [i.e. Guelf agents] in their holes, in order to find out their intrigues'. But the fund was later used to subsidize needy German newspapers, in the Government interest—whence these journals came to be nicknamed the 'Reptile Press', and earned merited contempt.

When I first saw Hanover it presented the melancholy aspect of a city that had once been a royal capital, the centre of a court, a parliament, and an army, and had lapsed into being a provincial town. The empty palaces were especially dreary—like those of Parma or Modena in modern Italy—disused saloons partly treated as offices, partly as museums. One odd memory remains with me—the only trace of old royalty which the Prussian Government allowed for some time to survive was the famous stud of cream-coloured horses at Herrenhausen—the suburban palace where the old Electress Sophia, the mother of George I, died just before her cousin, our Queen Anne, so missing by a few months the devolution of the British crown on the House of Hanover by the Succession Act. These cream-coloured horses were regarded as a sort of totem by patriotic Hanoverians—it may be remembered that a running horse is the badge of the old Brunswick-Luneburg duchy, out of which Hanover developed, and appears on Guelfic coats-of-arms and coinages. The good people of Hanover used to come out by hundreds to Herrenhausen on Sunday afternoons and worship these sacred horses, dropping the sigh of regret for the good old times all along the stables. I believe that the Prussian Government afterwards suppressed the stud, precisely because of these Sunday demonstrations. Distant cousins of these horses long drew King George V's golden state-coach to the opening of Westminster parliaments—for his ancestor, the first

George in England, brought a draft of them over from Herrenhausen to London, and the breed was perpetuated in the royal stables. How long will it be before horses are superseded by state-motors—in the (I suppose) inevitable evolution of things? But we are a conservative race!

The most striking thing that I saw in Hanover, in one of my visits, took place in the railway-station. There was a new Prussian Governor arriving from Berlin, a matter which was to be made an affair of some state ceremonial. There was a band, a burgo-master, and a great many military officers waiting on the platform for him, also a mounted escort outside the station entrance. In most countries there would also have been a crowd of sightseers. Not so in Hanover! The arrival was being severely boycotted; the station was not in the least crowded. But what was really startling was that, on the arrival of the Governor's train, and while he was being greeted by the official group, I heard suppressed hisses and hoots all round the station. At first I could not make out where they came from, but presently detected that the scattered passengers, waiting about the platform and the book-stalls, were surreptitiously uttering seditious noises, while they kept their backs to the ceremony, and pretended to be reading time-tables and advertisements, or purchasing newspapers. It was so well managed a little demonstration that the police did not seem to be finding anyone to lay hands upon. I am sure that they would have done so if they could have managed it, for there was a song about Berlin which ensured the arrest of anyone caught singing it—and hissing a Governor is a good deal worse than satirizing the imperial capital.

But I have perhaps said enough about the hatred for Prussia in the annexed states. The third current of

general dislike for the Empire and all that it meant was by no means confined to Frankfort or Hanover—it was the general protest of the elder generation of old-fashioned Germans, all over the Reich, against new methods of militarism, bureaucracy, and I think I must add efficiency and bustle—against the mentality which wants to get rid of old customs and to get rich in a hurry. The German of the pre-Empire period was—outside political circles—rather a simply-living, leisurely, and easygoing person. He was decidedly sentimental; to sit in a leafy arbour and drink from very long beer-glasses while listening to distant folk-music was certainly one of his ideals. He was quite contented with a very definite class-stratification, and had a great respect for his ducal or princely sovereign—so long as the latter did not require too much taxation, and abstained from too great moral or administrative eccentricities. He had no great desire to make money quickly, or to live ostentatiously. A comfortable leisureliness of life was ensued by his enormous midday meal—which left him in a state of quasi-coma from 1 o'clock to 3. I remember well the time when one could get no business done in the early afternoon, except in big and bustling towns. I do not mean to say that there were not plenty of Germans who were politically minded, active, ambitious, and fond of making and spending money. But there were a great many who were not, and who hated industrialism, bureaucracy, and the ever-present military régime very sincerely.

I had some talks with them. Germany (they said) was no longer *gemüthlich*—sympathetic and comfortable. No one was any longer contented to live in the good old way. I particularly remember one charming old innkeeper, the proprietor of what had once been a rather famous inn, who expatiated to me on the days

when his clients were his guests and friends. He used to sit at the top of what was a real table d'hôte, and conversed with them at leisure. Now the traveller was a hurried being, who wanted separate tables, waiters in shirt-fronts, and private baths! All this was the fault of Bismarck, who had made Germans pretentious, extravagant, and luxurious! This generation of admirers of the good old times gradually died out—it was pretty well dead by the period of my second set of travels in Germany, between 1907 and 1913. While it continued to exist, it found itself rather at a loss how to take sides in politics: it was essentially nationally patriotic and believed in *Deutsche Treue* and *Deutsche Biederkeit*, but this was not necessarily connected with German-Prussian Imperialism. 'Conservatism' in political nomenclature had unfortunately got tied up with ideas of East Prussian Junkerism and governmental bureaucracy—both abhorrent to the old-fashioned German. Unless one was a Catholic one could not back the 'Centre Party'. Social-Democrats were just as objectionable at one end of the line as Conservatives at the other—they were wanting to upset the old order of things. The 'National Liberal' party was rather too prone to ally itself with Bismarck and the Conservatives, because of strong imperialistic tendencies. Probably the so-called 'Freisinnig' or 'open-minded' party was the most attractive to the old-fashioned Germans—it was middle-class, anti-clerical, anti-militarist, and anti-bureaucratic. But it never had any decisive influence, and was an ineffective party of protest against tendencies too strong to be resisted. I think that the old-fashioned anti-Bismarck German largely abstained from voting at all, and merely grumbled.

If any region in Germany ought to have been the

centre of effective resistance to Prussian Imperialism during the days of both Bismarck and William II, it should have been Bavaria, where there was combined a dominant solid Catholic majority, an intense local patriotism, an old military caste which had not forgotten its defeat by Prussia in 1866, and a long-established dynasty with great memories—twice Bavaria had given emperors to the old 'Holy Roman Empire'. And the ruling sovereign in 1871, Louis II, had been secretly opposed to the great federal union consummated at Versailles, and had only been driven into taking his part in it by strong pressure and threats. It looked as if a Wittelsbach king, backed by the unanimous support of his subjects, would have been the natural check on Prussian imperialism. He was the second most important personage in the Empire, and they represented the most solid block of national sentiment.

How it came to pass that Bavaria, as a state, did not take the part that might have been expected in modern German history, is one of the examples of the fact that we must never speak of the inevitable in practical politics. Individual personalities count—for good or evil. Bavaria was defrauded of her influence for nearly forty years by the fact that two successive kings were lunatics, shut up under confinement, and that, in default of a representative chief of the state, there was no one who could take the authoritative lead in defence of particularist interests. As everyone of my generation remembers, Louis II, the king reigning in 1871, always melancholy and eccentric, developed very shortly after the creation of the German Empire traces of mental irregularity, which gradually verged into complete insanity. But it was a good many years before he reached that stage of madness which made it obvious that he must be sequestered and put under confinement.

As is generally known, he had the two obsessions of megalomania and ochlophobia, a complete conviction of his own omniscience in certain arts—particularly music and architecture,—combined with a nervous dislike of finding himself in a large company. Court routine and state pageantry became gradually so hateful to him that he never showed himself in public—for the last five years before his deposition he never attended a ceremony, and he had to be visited by his ministers singly. It was inconceivable that he should take any part in politics, or be seen at assemblies of princes. He moved about by night and with mystery, driving furiously. His foibles were strange: a great virtuoso in music—especially the music of Wagner, of whom he was an enthusiastic patron—he would have whole operas presented to him in the empty Court theatre, where he sat in the darkened royal box alone.

A more expensive freak was the rearing of magnificent Gothic castles in impossible situations among the Bavarian Alps—perched on precipices overhanging romantic lakes,—which were absolutely barred to everyone save himself and a few confidential attendants. His behaviour in these solitudes was said to be most eccentric: unless reports are absolutely lying, he would array himself in the armour and robes of Wagner's Lohengrin, and career round his lake in a motor-boat, shaped like the swan which drew that mythical hero to the rescue of Elsa. I can recall Munich before King Louis was absolutely put under restraint. The royal palace was normally closed; but by taking trouble one could get permission to go round the picture gallery and the state rooms, under charge of a minor official. But one had to do it furtively—there was always a bare chance that the king might turn up unexpectedly, and burst out into explosions of wild rage if he found

anyone had been admitted into his abode. Hence one was hurried round: the lackey always keeping a nervous ear open for noises that might mean a royal arrival, and locking each chamber behind him when we had left it. A connection of my own was once caught in this way, and hurried out of a side entrance *Augenblicklich im Himmelsnamen* by a terrified chamberlain.

When in 1886 King Louis became absolutely unmanageable, refused to sign warrants and State papers, or to see his ministers, he was at last declared irresponsible, and put in a private asylum, where he raged bitterly at the restraint. But by Wittelsbach family law he could not be deposed, and a regent had to be appointed; this was his uncle, Prince Luitpold, a worthy old gentleman of sixty-six. The regent was carefully restricted from regal power—this was Bismarck's game—and did not even take over possession of the royal palace, being confined to a little 'regent's palace' of unobtrusive size and appearance. He was too old and placid to mix himself in political disputes, and Bavaria still had no royal representative in the Council of the Empire, nor any leader for her attitude of protest.

But not long after his deposition Louis II committed suicide in a fit of frenzy—hurling himself and the doctor who was in charge of him into deep water of a lake. This long-delayed end of the mad king, one would have supposed, should have put Bavaria under a real sovereign—if an elderly one. But it was not so—King Louis had a younger brother Otto, whom no one had seen or heard of for many years. He was an imbecile, though not a raving lunatic like his elder brother. Using Wittelsbach family law as an excuse, the Emperor and the Council of Princes ruled that Otto must be considered King of Bavaria, and his uncle still kept down to the position of regent. This



absurd situation endured for twenty-six years more, till 1912, and it was only after Luitpold had died in extreme old age, not long before the outbreak of the Great War of 1914, that his son, Louis III, himself well in his sixties, was permitted to assume the royal crown, though the imbecile Otto still survived.

Meanwhile Bavarian sentiment was always anti-Prussian, all the more so because the country was devotedly Catholic. For a long time there was quiet opposition to all attempts to absorb it into complete amalgamation with the imperial organization. To keep the army separate was a point of honour: I can remember the very bitter feeling that prevailed when the old Bavarian uniform—light blue, with a curious brass helmet with a strip of fur on it—had to be given up, and darker blue with the hated Prussian spiked helmet (*Pickelhaube*) adopted. I happened to be dining in a hotel at Speier where the officers' mess of a Bavarian regiment used to be held, and saw them dashing down their familiar headgear with curses at having had to wear it for the last time that day. Next time that I was in South Germany the uniform was almost indistinguishable, except for some details, from the Prussian. The last survival visible of Bavarian particularism was that, right down to 1918, the State preserved its special postage stamps. When all the rest of Germany was using the very ugly imperial eagle as its badge, one still got in Munich the two Wittelsbach lions, holding up the blue-and-white chequered shield.

All these reminiscences date back to the years between 1879 and 1892. On my next series of visits to Germany, between 1907 and 1913, there was an enormous change visible: the old pre-Empire generation that I had known fifteen years before had almost died out, and with it a great deal of the old particularist hatred

for the Prussian Empire. Even in Hanover and Bavaria the feeling, if still existing, was not so openly expressed. Guelfism in Hanover got a deadly blow when the fourth Duke of Cumberland came to a bargain with William II, which his father and grandfather had always spurned, married the Emperor's daughter, and accepted the duchy of Brunswick as compensation for the kingdom of Hanover. This was a curious business—Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel had been in the hands of another branch of the Guelfs, whose common ancestor with the Lüneburg-Hanover Guelfs lived three centuries back. The Brunswick line absolutely dying out—with an eccentric duke who lived in Switzerland and collected diamonds—Prussia took possession of the duchy, and held it out for years to the exiled Hanoverian royal family—the next male heirs—to be given in return for abandoning their rights to their old kingdom. After nearly fifty years of steady refusal the third generation took the bribe—to the sorrow of all the old partisans. Imagine what Jacobites would have felt if Charles Edward had come to a bargain with George III to take over the kingdom of the Isle of Man, and marry a Hanoverian princess!

But the main thing to notice in the years before the war was that the old *gemüthlich* homely Germany was getting swamped by commercialism, cosmopolitanism, and ostentation. Berlin in 1880 had still looked like an overgrown provincial town, now it was beginning to pride itself on being a *Weltstadt* with magnificent buildings and night-clubs—very noisy, luxuriant, and tasteless. All over the Empire there seemed to be any amount of money going—the possession of which was reflected by very large and expensive buildings in rather detestable taste. And there was a national self-assertiveness which perhaps owed something to the

personal influence of William II, who was always on view and doing something in the self-advertisement line. How Bismarck—while he still lived after his dismissal from the Chancellorship—must have hated the manners and customs of his new master! I once saw William commit a dread solecism. Being at Venice, as the guest of King Victor Emanuel III, he was lodged in the royal palace, one side of which looks out on the Piazza of San Marco. There happened to be a great many German tourists in Venice that spring, and William II was seized with the unhappy idea of addressing them from a window of the palace, with a speech about the greatness of Germany. They crowded a corner of the Piazza—he gesticulated from the balcony above. I looked on—it was rather a rainy day, and he was addressing a forest of umbrellas. Italian spectators were much offended, and naturally, for a guest must not take upon himself the attitude of a sovereign addressing his people when he is on foreign soil. The Italians were already grumbling at the multitudes of German visitors in Venice—as one newspaper remarked, that ancient city now seemed to have become no more than the inevitable first stage of Berlin honeymooning couples—the German language seemed to be the prevailing dialect in most of its public places. But this instance of tactlessness was far exceeded on the occasion when William II had an entry broken in the wall of Jerusalem, in order that he might ride through in state in the garb of a crusader. By the way, I saw this costume exhibited under glass in the Hohenzollern Museum at Mon Bijou, along with many dozens of other bright garments, which William had worn on special occasions—including the robes of an Oxford Honorary D.C.L.

I shall always remember two incidents of the year

1908. One was a dinner with Bethmann-Hollweg, then not yet Chancellor, but Prussian Prime Minister. We were a mixed company of foreigners—my next neighbour was Professor Svoronos, the director of the Museum at Athens—an old friend, who was always getting into political trouble with the Greek Government. I had good opportunity of studying our host, and sized him up as a conscientious and rather benevolent bureaucrat, with absolutely no epoch-making capacities about him. But I was wrong—he was to make history, and to go down to posterity with his famous characterization of the international declaration concerning the neutrality of Belgium as ‘a mere scrap of paper’ affixed to him for ever. Also his almost equally famous speech in the Reichstag, to the effect that the invasion of Belgium was a gross violation of the law of nations—but necessity knows no laws, ‘we must hack through somehow’, will never be forgotten.

The second memory of 1908 that sticks by me was a very long conversation in the express between Berlin and Frankfort with an intelligent business man from the latter city, who had got *Einkreisung* on the brain. He believed it to be absolutely certain that the King of England was plotting the destruction of Germany by an alliance with Russia and France and many minor states. This he was doing out of a personal detestation for his nephew, the Emperor William. I tried to convince him that King Edward was an elderly and easy-going personage, not a Macchiavelli, or a plotter of wars, and that Great Britain was under a Liberal Government, which would be incapable of taking offensive action, unless provoked in some outrageous way. But it was of little use urging that Mr. Asquith was not a Bismarck or a Cavour, and that the Liberal party was pacifist rather than anything else. Oddly enough, I had a very

similar and even more striking talk in 1911, again in the train, with an East Prussian Lutheran pastor, who preached to me that every German knew that his country was being plotted against, and that five million German soldiers were ready to die to defend the Holy Fatherland. What particularly horrified him was that the English, being Anglo-Saxons, could dream of leaguings with degenerate Latins and Slavs against a nation of kindred blood. Again I tried to argue that we were not plotters, and had no wish for wars or the destruction of Germany. But he refused to be convinced, and took up the odd and paradoxical thesis that perhaps we were lacking in eager patriotism, which was so well developed in Germany. When it was hinted to him that what he called patriotism we called Jingoism he was interested, and said that he had never heard of the word *Dschingoismus*, but would look it up in the dictionary!

There can be no doubt that millions of Germans had been inoculated with the *Einkreisung* bacillus, and believed seriously that Mr. Asquith's Government had taken up the Macchiavellian plans of Edward VII. On the other hand, many had been studying the pernicious works of that curious renegade Houston Chamberlain, and believed that Great Britain was so far gone in national degeneracy that she would never fight about anything. The two theses were diametrically inconsistent, but both were very demoralizing—in the one case England was a malevolent secret enemy, in the other case she was a negligible quantity. Both ideas tended to the disregard of English susceptibilities—some thought that we were hostile, others that we were contemptible. Both were wrong, but the psychological results in each case were deplorable.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE LAST GREAT TRIAL AT WESTMINSTER: BELT *v.* LAWES

JUNE-JULY AND NOVEMBER 1882

IN the summer of 1882 I was present at a historic event of no mean interest—the last great trial in the Westminster Law Courts. I hold that Westminster Hall is without doubt the most solemn spot in all England. I do not except from my judgment even Westminster Abbey itself. For the Abbey is full, it is true, of the tombs of kings and queens and statesmen and poets—but men and women are mortal and a grave is the inevitable end of all of us. But Westminster Hall has seen, again and again, not the entombment of the dead but the sentence to death of the living—of great men in the prime of their lives, who had made their mark on history, and went forth with the axe carried with its blade towards them, destined to the scaffold.

Of some the names are graven in brass plates upon the floor—Sir William Wallace, Lord Strafford, Charles Stuart King of England. But countless other men of note stood to hear their death-warrant on these stones and before these steps—the favourites of Richard II, Sir Thomas More, Edward Duke of Buckingham, Protector Northumberland and his victim Protector Somerset, Sir Harry Vane who died because he was a Republican, and William Lord Stafford who died because he was a Catholic—Guy Fawkes and his fellows, and the Jacobite

Lords of 1715 and 1745. Under this roof William Laud withstood so well the accusation of treason that his venomous foes had to attain him, and Warren Hastings listened for years to the misguided eloquence of the Whig orators, who pretended to know so much, and really knew so little, of India and its problems.

To-day Westminster Hall is a vast empty space—a soaring roof overhanging the historic stones of a level floor, with gloom between on many a winter day, while the sightless eyes of six bearded Plantagenet kings glare down from the southern wall on the infrequent visitor on his way to the House of Commons. But I can well remember it a place of bustle and crowds for months on end, when the Courts of Law of her Majesty Queen Victoria were still opening on its right-hand side, and the hall itself was the 'salle des pas perdus' for the multitude of lawyers and litigants, where the judge of Gilbert's *Trial by Jury*

In Westminster Hall long danced a dance  
Like a semi-despondent fury,  
For he thought that he never would get the chance  
Of addressing a British Jury.

It is difficult to-day to visualize the Westminster Hall of the XVIII or XIX Century, before that fatal day in the winter of 1882 saw all the pomp and life—all the scarlet and ermine, the wigs and stuff and bombazine, migrate north-eastward to the new Law Courts in the Strand. But I happen to have seen the last great trial that began in Westminster—though oddly enough it did not end there. For while the pleadings were heard beside the great hall of Rufus and Richard II, the last echoes of the case, the appeal and the wrangling about damages assessed, took place after the first opening of Street's new Hispano-Gothic structure—

hard by the Griffin which commemorates the first of the old Queen Victoria's appearances in a great public ceremony, after so many years of seclusion at Balmoral and Osborne.

The hall is vast as we see it to-day, but it did not look nearly so vast when it was crammed with all the paraphernalia of the Law, when Courts sat screened in its corners, and their woodwork and curtains extended far out into the central space. There are many old engravings which give us a memory of it, but of all, perhaps, that of Gravelot—date late George II—with many a line of sarcastic verse written below, is the most informative.

We see three Courts sitting at once, each with its three judges and its railed-in premises, while up and down the central space range a motley crowd. Barristers hurrying from one court to another, ushers hunting for witnesses, witnesses male and female in droves, waiting about interminably for their call. All down the south side of the hall are counters and shelves, at which booksellers were permitted to vend foolscap, pens, red tape, and evidently law-books also—some of them in the picture seem to have three or four shelves of goodly folios. The central walk was a regular thoroughfare for persons going to or from the old House of Commons, then just at the top of the steps. Also, if the picture may be trusted, for clergy and choristers from the Abbey, and Westminster schoolboys, who had chartered privileges in the House of Commons. Sinister figures represent the company of professional false-witnesses, waiting about to be hired by an unscrupulous counsel, the barrister who

From Wreathock's gang, not right or laws  
Supports his trembling client's cause.

Wreathock was, I suppose, the Dr. Moriarty of his



day, the organizer of perjury, who undertook to provide the right sort of witness to vouch for any alibi or forgery. They might be known by the straw discreetly peeping out, which marked them as 'men of straw'—the explanation of the term is not generally known.

By 1882 'Wreathock's gang' had disappeared—though I saw unprepossessing folks enough haunting the hall: and the booksellers with their counters and shelves were gone also, and the normal entrance to the House of Commons was now elsewhere, since Barry had recast the geography of the Palace of Westminster after the great fire of 1834. But there was still a lively crowd circulating under the great hammer-beam roof, where now as you pass you see but three or four rare visitants.

Clearly it was necessary that all the legal trappings should be movable, for on rare occasions they were all swept away, in order that the hall should show as much open space as possible. There are rare examples of this clearance being made for other State purposes, but the most notable occasions were for the coronation banquets that followed the crowning of a new sovereign in the neighbouring Abbey. Often there were long intervals between these ceremonies; but sometimes they followed each other at no great distance—as in the cases of Edward VI, Mary, and Elizabeth—three coronations in eleven years (1547–1558), and James II, William and Mary, and Anne—three in seventeen years (1685–1702). Every inch of room was wanted for these feasts, at which not only the royal family and the houses of Lords and Commons but all the magnates of the realm were entertained. And a large open space had to be left in the middle for the entrance of the King's Champion, who, on horseback and in full armour, rode to the front of the royal table, threw down his gauntlet, and challenged all and sundry to

dispute, if they dared, the rightful succession of the newly crowned king (or queen). The last of these tremendous ceremonies was held by George IV, who revelled in every sort of display, and laughed at pleas for economy. But July 19, 1821, saw the representation of the Dymokes of Scrivelsby ride for the last time up the hall, and receive the king's cup in guerdon of his challenge. William IV was the exponent of meritorious parsimony in hard times: he got himself crowned with small state, in an admiral's uniform, instead of the silk and brocade in which his brother had delighted. And he suppressed the coronation banquet altogether, to the relief of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Lord High Chamberlain, but to the sad disappointment of all those who loved pageantry, and a splendid show, and a sumptuous repast. So the Champion's armour has rusted for a hundred years, and the lawyers were never again dislodged from their haunts, till the great migration of 1882, when they departed for the Strand, never to return. In the XIXth Century the judges no longer sat in the actual hall, but in three courts built against its northern side, and approached by three doors, which have now been blocked up—one has to guess at their exact position.

I chanced in June–July 1882 to be settled down in Westminster for a fortnight, and to have many casual hours of leisure, which I very wisely employed in seeing the last of an old show. The Courts were under sentence of removal, and one would never again get the chance of seeing a trial in the king's old palace. The reason for my presence in those parts was that I had just finished my final examination in the School of Literae Humaniores, and, while expecting my viva-voce somewhere in the middle of July, was hung up in a state of some anxiety for the weeks that stood between the

paper work and the oral examination. To give myself something else to think about than the approaching results of the schools, I put my name down for the Civil Service examination that happened to fall in the last days of June and the early half of July 1882. Doing another set of papers spread over several weeks, I succeeded in getting the anxieties of 'Greats' out of my head. But there were many days on which papers were being set on Law, Science, or Mathematics, in the all-embracing Civil Service examination, which was then held in Westminster, and not, as it is now, in the neighbourhood of Burlington House. When such subjects were being dealt with, I used my leisure in attending the great case of *Belt v. Lawes*, and got much pure delight therefrom. Incidentally I may mention that my efforts at the examination were so far recognized that I was offered a clerkship in the War Office, which I did not accept, but returned to Oxford to take a second School and compete for a fellowship.

*Belt v. Lawes* is, perhaps, little remembered to-day, but it shared with the still more famous case of *Whistler v. Ruskin* (1879) (which befell three years earlier) the honour of being the longest and the most amusing cases of legal contest between two angry votaries of Art. The names of Whistler and Ruskin are both well remembered, though even they are beginning to be a little less familiar in the XXth Century. But *Belt* and *Lawes* are, I fear, unknown to those of the present generation, though they were household words to everyone in 1882, and their litigation was a record in its line. For it extended over no less than forty-three days of hearing, and after having started in June and gone on till the recess, was resumed again in the winter at Westminster, but ended in the new Law Courts in the Strand, where *Lawes's* appeal was finally rejected.

Richard Claude Belt was a self-made man and a most prolific sculptor, the sort of artist to whom provincial town-councils and families desirous of setting up a really handsome monument to a deceased member, at a moderate cost, almost inevitably repaired. He was a London boy who had started life in an office, and made a name among his companions as a facile draughtsman and caricaturist. He had won art prizes at night-school competitions, and finally got the chance of being taken on as a junior assistant in the studio of Charles Bennett Lawes, then already a well-known sculptor. He worked in it till 1875, when he quarrelled with his master and went off to 'live on his own', at first with three young partners of his own sort, and then as the head of a kind of *bottega*, as the XVth-Century Italians would have called it, where he employed a number of pupils and assistants—Scholtz and Verheyden, Harrison and Curtice. The amount of statues that the studio turned out was surprising: rival sculptors gnashed their teeth, and told stories about the artistic capacity of Richard Belt, and the percentage of his work that was to be found on any individual statue that came out of the *bottega* in Hugh Street. A successful sculptor's works are perhaps more offensive to his rivals than those of a successful painter, for they are displayed in much more public and prominent positions. Now undoubtedly in artistic circles jealousy and criticism are quite normal phenomena, and perhaps they do the person criticized no harm, so long as they merely protest against the art and taste of his productions. Mr. Epstein still survives, and seems to be able to secure new patrons, though half London may cry out against 'Rima' or 'Maternity'.

But Mr. Belt was, so his enemies declared, not so much a sculptor as an *entrepreneur*, or broker of

sculptured works of art. He was a provocative and advertising sort of person, who gave to many people an impression that he was not quite 'straight'—in which theory events that happened long after this trial justified his critics. But of that more anon. At the time of his famous lawsuit he was in the high-tide of success; he had secured the prize in the competition for the figure of Byron which still graces Hyde Park Corner, had executed statues of Dean Stanley, Charles Kingsley, the Prince Imperial, Conway, Admiral Rous, Leopold Rothschild, and many other worthies, and had just secured an order from Queen Victoria herself, for the figure in bronze of the recently deceased Lord Beaconsfield. Ninety of his works, first and last, were exhibited during the trial of 1882. Some people admired him as a self-taught genius, all the more because he was frowned upon by the main clique of the members of the Royal Academy. Why, they asked, should a man of talent be the butt of a ring of artistic Brahmins, because he was a bit of an advertiser, and ready to contract for any and every sculptural job? This was mere snobbery and prejudice on the part of the Academicians.

Quite a different sort of individual was the defendant in this famous trial, Charles Bennett Lawes. He was a brilliant amateur, the son of a baronet, who had gone through the Cambridge honour school of Science for his degree. But, what was far more important, he had got into the University Boat, and had stroked the crew which rowed for Cambridge from Putney to Mortlake in 1869. When he left the University he had to choose a career—his father was still alive and he did not succeed to the baronetcy for many years after. The career which he chose was one not generally selected by Old Blues—that of a sculptor, and he achieved no

mean success therein—artistically rather than financially I believe. But he had other interests of the most varied kind, such as scientific agriculture and bicycling. His statues may still be seen not infrequently in galleries and other places where statues most do congregate. He had a studio in Chelsea, and among his assistants had been for a short time Richard Claude Belt. They had not parted amicably—Belt said that Lawes underpaid him, Lawes that Belt was a young humbug.

Now Lawes was much annoyed at the after-career of Belt: it was not that he envied his skill, but that he disbelieved in its existence, after having had him for a time as a pupil. The man, he said, was a mere advertiser out to make money. Most, or all, of the statues which he sold were the work of his assistants: he signed stuff in whose creation he had no real part. He was a blatant bounder, and a fraud who deserved exposure.

Now unluckily for himself Lawes had many literary as well as artistic friends, and among them was Mr. Bowles, Editor of *Vanity Fair*. That weekly society paper is now only remembered for its set of brilliant coloured caricatures of men of mark, which still adorn many a study and a smoking-room. But in the 1880's it was something of a power in London—much as *Truth* was in the days of Labouchere. It was skilled in innuendo, and usually just stopped short on the edge of libels which might lead to lawsuits. For the future discomfiture of Charles Lawes, his friend the editor allowed him to give the details for, and generally to inspire, an article which appeared in *Vanity Fair* of August 21, 1881. Lawes declared that he did not actually write it, indeed it was Mr. Bowles himself who put it together. But he did write, and owned to it, a letter to the Lord Mayor of London, in which he called that magnate's attention to the article in *Vanity Fair*,

and implored him not to give a sculptural job then pending in the City to such a man as Belt. He sent copies of the letter to all the aldermen, and certain other persons. There was no doubt that 'publication' in the legal sense had taken place. The allegations made by Lawes were very definite: not only was it declared that Belt was no artist, but 'a statue-jobber, and broker of other men's sculpture,' and that his admirers were 'the victims of a monstrous imposture,' but definite details were given. His statue of Dean Stanley was really the work of a well-known artist named Brock: the Byron Memorial, which won the prize competition, was by his assistant Verheyden, a Belgian. And so forth.

These proceedings of Lawes drove Belt, perhaps not over-willingly, into litigation. Fortunately for him Lawes had implied not only that he made unscrupulous use of his assistants' designs and hands, but even that he was no sculptor at all, and incapable of producing an original work of art. This exaggeration turned out to be the point on which Lawes lost his case, for, as we shall see, Belt showed in the end that he *could* make a statue, though Lawes amply proved his main point, that much work came out of the Hugh Street studio which was entirely designed and executed by other persons than Belt, who nevertheless took the credit and the cash.

In February 1882 Belt entered his suit for libel, imputing to Lawes both the article in *Vanity Fair* and the letters sent to the Lord Mayor and Aldermen. The case did not, however, come on till June 22nd, so that I was able to hear the best days of it, when I was in London in late June and early July for my Civil Service examination. The counsel engaged were famous men, and ruinously expensive to the litigants. For

Belt there was Hardinge Giffard (afterwards the ever-green Lord Halsbury, Chancellor to so many Conservative Governments) and Montagu Williams: for the defence appeared Charles Russell and Richard Webster, both fated to be in after years Lords Chief Justice. They certainly made a fine fight of it, and between them left one litigant marvellously depreciated in moral character, and the other sentenced to pay £5,000, which payment he avoided by deliberately going bankrupt. There was a special jury, and the presiding judge was Mr. Justice Hudleston.

It soon turned out that Belt was not going to deny that his assistants had done much to the statues that left his studio, but to support an artistic theory that the 'master' might inspire a work of art, and lawfully claim it, though the pupil alone had laid hands and chisel upon it. 'That the assistants might do the whole manual labour under the master's direction,' he said, 'is both usual and justifiable.' It was the 'direction' and 'inspiration' that counted. This was taking the inquiry into psychological quarters—it would be difficult for Lawes to prove that the 'master' had not 'inspired' and 'directed' a countless number of statues in the shortest possible time, if he was never required either to make the model in clay, or to work at reproducing it in marble. To convict Belt of vending other men's work as his own, it would be necessary to prove that the assistant produced the original model out of his own imagination, that the master never meddled with it, and that the assistant's original model was accurately reproduced in the finished article which was sold as the master's work. This Lawes boldly attempted to do, and succeeded in a great measure, owing to his having secured the aid of the Belgian Verheyden, one of Belt's most active assistants. The master and pupil had



recently parted in great wrath. According to Belt's story he had been travelling on the railway with a large portfolio or box containing drawings by Verheyden for various projected works of art. He had unfortunately lost the portfolio—how he could never make out—and had given the Belgian £300 in compensation. But Verheyden declared firstly that the drawings were worth much more than £300, and secondly that he never believed that they had been lost at all. Incensed at the behaviour of his employer, he had gone and placed the whole of his experiences in Belt's studio at the disposition of Lawes, who used them in his *Vanity Fair* article. 'He is a despicable being', said Belt. 'He has stolen my ideas', said Verheyden; 'when *my* design for the Byron statue was accepted, I telegraphed to him "J'ai gagné, réjouis toi", claiming the work as my own, and he never objected.' To which Belt replied that he did not know French, and had no idea what Verheyden's telegram had meant, or that he was claiming the credit for the model.

One of the most extraordinary features of this very amusing trial was that we spectators saw the Court from day to day crowded up with statues, models, and reliefs, which were usually covered with sheets, and had a most spectral appearance. Someone suggested that these ghosts were the work of 'ghosts' in the technical sense of the term. At which Mr. Belt burst out that the word was quite unknown to him: he was unaware that surreptitious producers of works of art not published under their names were so designated—indeed the term had first been used in his presence since the litigation was mooted a few months back. He only knew of 'pupils' and 'assistants' and 'apprentices'. Be this as it may, one of the not infrequent pieces of humour during the trial was that when the usher was requested to

strip the sheet from some hidden form, the numbers often seemed to have got wrong, and, when—let us say—Admiral Rous was asked for, the familiar face of Lord Beaconsfield was revealed. This always delighted the jury and audience, and enabled the learned counsel to indulge in impromptu witticisms, as to whether their opponents considered the likenesses to be satisfactory ones. On one day when a clumsy barrister completely knocked off the head of a statue the applause was terrific.

Belt's main line of attack on Lawes's allegation that he was not a competent sculptor at all, and could not by himself produce a statue, was to put through the witness-box day after day, in long succession, persons who had actually seen him at work on busts or figures—sometimes those of their deceased friends and relations, sometimes their own. A whole group of the Yorke family had watched him touching up the bust of their dead relative Elliott Yorke, and had induced him to make, in their presence, certain alterations in the clay model. Lady Clarence Paget and Mrs. Bischoffsheim had ordered busts of themselves from him, and had seen him follow out their directions for matters of detail. So had several other ladies. His studio had often been open to parties of distinguished visitors, who had seen him, in his sculptor's blouse, scraping away. George Augustus Sala, then perhaps the best-known literary man in London, had paid him a long visit, and written an article on his studio and his brilliant methods of execution. Three or four of his pupils were introduced to bear witness to his tireless capacity for work, and his originality. Evidence was brought to show the untrustworthiness of that other 'pupil' Verheyden, the Belgian, who had given away the secrets of the studio. It was insinuated that he was impecunious, greedy, and spiteful: he was not a person

whose evidence should count for much, and he had been notoriously ungrateful to the employer who had fed him for many months.

The weak point in the whole group of Belt's witnesses was that, with the exception of his pupils, they were all amateurs and not professional artists. For the most part they were well-known society people, with no technical knowledge.

After the prosecution had closed its case there was an enormous gap in the proceedings. The defence was only heard in November, owing to the closing of the Courts for the summer vacation. And therefore I only witnessed the first half of the trial, since by November I was back in Oxford reading for the Modern History School. I missed much amusement thereby.

When Charles Russell started on his defence of Lawes, he opened up with a general attack on the credibility of Belt, and followed it up first with proof of much unacknowledged help having been given in the making of the large majority of his statues, and then by expert evidence from a long train of sculptors and other artists, tending to prove that to their knowledge the plaintiff was incapable of producing many of the works which he alleged himself to have 'directed', or 'inspired', or 'invested with artistic merit'. This last curious phrase was employed quite frequently on both sides. Russell laid great stress on the fact that all Belt's witnesses (save of course his pupils, who were bound to back their employer) were amateurs, while he himself was about to bring forward the practical consensus of all professionals.

Charles Lawes himself, as defendant, was put first into the witness-box, and gave his account of the time when Belt was working in his studio. He had found him an artist of inferior ability, and had got rid of him

as useless: he was confident that the man could never have developed into a sculptor of merit. This was *ex parte* evidence, and it seems doubtful whether it was worth giving, considering the present relations between the two. Far more important was the examination of the Belgian Verheyden, who certainly knew all about the interior working of Belt's *bottega*, and claimed to have been the practical author of an enormous proportion of the statuary that had come out of it. According to him, Belt recklessly passed off as his own works to which he had neither given direction nor manual touch. The considerable sums which he had received from his employer were really payments not for help given, but for credit appropriated. There was an immense cross-examination, lasting for whole days, in which the plaintiff's counsel tried to prove that Verheyden was ungrateful, rancorous, and untrustworthy. The witness replied by representing Belt as mean, shifty, and recklessly impudent in claiming as his own work with which he had really had nothing to do. After a tedious perusal of these long screeds of cross-questioning and crooked answering, I am driven to the conclusion which Alice (as many readers will remember) formed about the Walrus and the Carpenter, viz. that they must *both* have been very unpleasant characters. And I should have inclined to believe a good deal of what each said about the other, but very little of what each said about himself. Verheyden, on his own showing, had lent himself for a long time to an elaborate system of fraud; Belt, if his story was true, had been grossly overpaying Verheyden for such work as he acknowledged that the Belgian had done for him—which seems unlikely in the highest degree. After Verheyden had left the box, somewhat smirched but also very much smirching, Charles Russell put in his big battalions.

The sculptors Brock and Hamo Thornycroft said that from their knowledge of their art they could swear that the so-called works of Belt showed the handling of at least three or four separate persons: no one man could have been responsible for all of them. Brock said that he had, some time back, lent Belt some assistance, and pointed out work of his own on at least one of the exhibited statues.

But the impressive evidence was that of the long array of Royal Academicians. There followed in succession Millais, Poynter, Frith, Briton Riviere, Horsley, Herbert, Leighton, Wells, all agreeing that the individual styles of different statues, busts, and reliefs showed the personal characteristics of many artists—some detected three, some as many as five or six. They were particularly sure that several of Verheyden's drawings and sketches were reproduced, without any alteration, in some of Belt's supposed statues. And they were of opinion that the changes and variations which several of the plaintiff's 'society' witnesses believed themselves to have seen in execution were mere sleight of hand and deception. The massed evidence of so many men of first-rate reputation was most impressive.

Then came the most astonishing and humorous diversion—which settled the whole case in the minds of the jury. There was something quite Gilbertian about it.

At the very beginning of the trial in June, Belt had said that he was quite ready to show, by modelling a figure in court, that he really was a sculptor, and not an exploiter of sculptors. And Justice Hudleston had said in reply that if, in his mind, the test should ever become necessary, he would not shrink from applying it. Now, at the end of the case, Hardinge Giffard, speaking for the plaintiff, repeated the offer. And the judge decided that the experiment could do no harm, and

that he himself would choose the model. He selected a Signor Pagliatti, an Italian gentleman of very marked features, of whom Belt had already made a small bust, which was among the exhibits. Charles Russell protested, and called the suggestion fatuous: I suspect that he had come to the conclusion that Belt *could* model more or less, and that it would be bad for Lawes if his general thesis—that the plaintiff was wholly incompetent to do any work whatever—was disproved. For the defence was committed to the declaration that Belt was not only an unscrupulous broker of other men's products, but incapable of producing anything himself. Signor Pagliatti said that he was quite ready to have his portrait taken again.

So the judge ordered a modelling-table and plenty of clay to be placed in an adjoining apartment, and bade Belt send for his blouse and his tools, and gave him the lunch hour, and another beyond it, to see what he could make of the Italian gentleman. Proper supervision was of course provided, lest 'ghosts' should slip in. At the end of the appointed time Belt had produced an unmistakable bust of Pagliatti, proving that he *could* do modelling. It was in vain that Charles Russell brought experts to swear that the two busts of the Italian gentleman were not by the same hand, and that three of the academicians deposed that they could not see any artistic merit in the new bust. Belt had proved that he was capable of producing a portrait against time, and under distracting conditions. So one-half of Lawes's contention was disproved, though the other half, viz. that Belt habitually sold other people's work as his own, had been practically demonstrated in the opinion of many of the audience.

After an eloquent speech by Hardinge Giffard, holding up to scorn artistic jealousy, and the attempt

of a clique of academicians to crush a self-made man of undoubted talent, the judge came in with a long and carefully-balanced summing up. He regretted the acrimony with which the case had been conducted, said that there must have been a good deal of perjury somewhere, and left it to the jury to decide where it had been. The jury, after an absence of only half an hour, returned to give a verdict in favour of Belt for the swingeing sum of £5,000. Lawes had failed, because he had gone too far in his denunciation of the pushing, self-advertising young man who had so much provoked his wrath.

There was a burst of cheering when the verdict was declared, and at the close of the proceedings a knot of Belt's admirers carried him shoulder high all down Westminster Hall, singing that he was a 'jolly good fellow'. This was the last echo of the law in the majestic building which had seen so many trials for the last six centuries or more. The subsequent appeal by Lawes was taken, and rejected, in Street's new Courts in the Strand.

But the obstinate defendant was determined that Belt should never see that £5,000. When his appeal was rejected in the New Law Courts, he declared himself bankrupt, and allowed the contents of his studio and his chambers to be sold up. This he could afford to do, because he was the heir to a baronetcy, and could fall back on an allowance from his father, even if all his worldly goods were confiscated. The proceeds of his bankruptcy were far from being sufficient to pay the enormous sum which Belt owed to his advocates, for their forty-three days of service in his interest. And so the trial ended, to the small profit of either litigant. But Belt fared worst: a good deal of the mud thrown during the trial had stuck: it was generally acknow-

ledged that he had been employing far too many clever assistants! His reputation was damaged, and his clientèle fell off, though he had plenty of admirers still.

The after fates of the litigants are almost as interesting to follow out as were the details of their long-drawn contest in the courts. Their futures were to be singularly different—the extremes of repute and disrepute.

A few months after Lawes's bankruptcy, Belt had also to declare himself insolvent, since the enormous expenses of the trial could not be defrayed out of his adversary's pocket. He still retained a considerable body of clients and supporters, but his diminished artistic earnings were far from sufficing to cover his rather expensive tastes. Lawes had called him in the famous *Vanity Fair* article 'a broker', and such he really was, but he now developed into a broker of other things than busts and statues. He had somehow picked up a competent knowledge of the current value of pictures, furniture, and precious stones. And our next and most unhappy meeting with him finds him in the capacity of a dealer in jewellery—in which he carried out a most unscrupulous fraud on one of his former society friends, who had supported him with such vigour during the trial at Westminster. On March 13, 1886, less than four years after the ending of the famous duel with Lawes, Richard Claude Belt is found indicted in the Criminal Court before Mr. Justice Stephen and a special jury, for obtaining a large sum of money by fraudulent misrepresentation, in a deal about Oriental jewellery. His brother Walter Belt—described in the indictment as a photographer, but apparently a man of many arts—was at first linked with him as a party in a conspiracy to defraud, but was finally dismissed from the case, and took no harm from it.

The person whom Richard Belt had selected as his



prey had been carefully chosen from among those who had money and liked spending it, but were not competent connoisseurs. Sir William Neville Abdy was a baronet of considerable wealth, aged thirty-eight: he had married a Bohemian lady, Maria Theresa Petrizka of Prague—possibly Bohemian in every sense of the word—to whom he was in the habit of presenting large quantities of jewellery. He had been a patron of Belt in the old days before the trial of 1882, and had lent him £2,000 towards carrying on his litigation—which had naturally never been repaid: but they remained on intimate terms. Early in 1886 Richard Belt approached Sir William with a proposition—he said that he had come across a Mrs. Murphy, an Irishwoman, who had been a favourite of the late Sultan Abdul Aziz of Turkey, and who, after the Sultan's murder, had escaped from Constantinople with vast amounts of valuable jewellery, presented to her by the Padischah. She was now in low water, and wanted to sell off these splendid Oriental jewels—they could be got from her at a mere fraction of their real value. Sir William said that he had not by him at the moment the money required for such a vast purchase—sums ranging from £8,000 to £14,000 were mentioned. Whereupon Belt said that a friend of his, a medical man in South Kensington, would provide £4,600 down, at 6 per cent. interest till he was paid off, if the baronet could find the rest. This he agreed to do—the judge who summed up at the end of the case observed that Sir William seemed to be a person easily influenced and not too wise.

Accordingly Belt handed over to him in detachments a great quantity of jewellery of a showy sort. Unfortunately it did not come from the non-existent Mrs. Murphy, but had been bought piecemeal from pawn-brokers all over London, some items by Belt, some by

his brother Walter. They seem to have laid out over £2,000 upon it. Sir William then began to make gifts from the stock to his wife, who appears to have been a very acquisitive lady—also suspicious. The trouble started when she protested, in some wrath, that a very striking diamond plaque just given by her husband was one which she had seen Miss Florence St. John, the well-known actress, wearing on the stage quite recently, so that it could not have come from Constantinople. As a matter of fact this was not that plaque, and the lady was wrong, but the allegation started Sir William on a search for the origins of the collection. He put the matter in the hands of Lewis and Lewis, who discovered without much difficulty that many of the pieces had been bought quite recently at different pawnshops, either by Richard Belt, or by his brother Walter. Some of them were quite worthless and inferior stuff. It was also discovered that the medical man in South Kensington, to whom Sir William was paying interest at 6 per cent. on £4,600, was a myth.

Greatly incensed at the way in which he had been cheated, Abdy prosecuted Belt for obtaining from him £8,400 in all by fraudulent misrepresentation. The whole story of the origin of the jewels was a fiction, and some of them were worthless. Belt's very poor defence was that he had never told Sir William any story about jewels from Turkey. The conversations about them had never been in the presence of any third person, who could be called as a witness one way or the other. He pleaded that in the mere course of trade he had bought a lot of jewellery cheap, and found a buyer who would give full value for it. Mr. Justice Stephen, in his summing up, observed that it was, no doubt, not a crime to buy cheap and sell dear, and that the question as to whether there had been fraudulent

misrepresentation lay with the jury. The twelve men, after a very short absence, brought in a verdict of guilty, and Richard Claude Belt received a sentence of one year's imprisonment for obtaining money under false pretences.

So went out of sight, for good, the man who had been for six or seven years the best-known sculptor in England, and whose alleged works may still be seen in public places. No one has recorded what the observations of Charles Lawes on the topic may have been. Probably they were 'I told you so—the man was a swindler, but I have had to pay pretty dearly for telling the truth to the public'.

The after-tale of Lawes is of a far different sort. After the trial at Westminster he was considered by his numerous and influential artistic friends as a hero and a martyr—he had done a public service by exposing a charlatan, though the verdict had gone against him. A few years later he was President of the Incorporated Society of British Sculptors. He arranged the British section of the great international exhibition of sculpture at Rome, in which his own 'Dirce' was the largest group shown. But art was not his only joy: on the invention of the pneumatic tyre for bicycles, he became [at 55!] a demonstrator of speed, and won the 25-mile race for amateurs in 51 minutes 15 $\frac{3}{4}$  seconds. But he was still better known for his series of experiments upon chemical manures, in the well-known model farm at Rothamsted, which his father had started. The statistics of the 'Rothamsted Experiments' were famous for many years. He succeeded to his father's baronetcy in 1900, and assumed in addition to the familiar Lawes the strange name of Wittewronge—derived from ancestors on the spindle side. He left the baronetcy—now with the double name—to his son,

when he died in the autumn of 1911. He was cremated at Golder's Green, before an attendance of friends which included all the noted artists of the day. He has obtained a column and a half of space in the *Dictionary of National Biography*—and that (no doubt) is equivalent to immortality!

## CHAPTER IV

### MR. GLADSTONE AT ALL SOULS COLLEGE<sup>1</sup>

JANUARY 29—FEBRUARY 8, 1890

IN my introductory foreword I mentioned that when I settled down to teach history in the University of Oxford, Modern History was supposed to end at the Great Reform Bill of 1832, or at any rate at the accession of Queen Victoria in 1837, and that all that came after fell rather into the category of 'Contemporary Events', which were not to be dignified with the name of History. Hence we had a complete break between the generations which had made history and the generation which was now making contemporary politics. But there was just one surviving figure from 'historical' times which was still with us, and was provoking our detestation or our admiration according as we happened to be Conservatives or Liberals. I mean of course William Ewart Gladstone, born in 1809, a member of the first Reformed Parliament in 1832, Prime Minister in 1868-73, 1880-85, and 1886, and destined in the future to hold that office yet once again in extreme old age. I had the good fortune to be in close contact with the 'Grand Old Man'—his official title among his followers—for ten continuous days in 1890, between his third

<sup>1</sup> In this chapter I must acknowledge great indebtedness to my friend, C. R. L. Fletcher's booklet on *Mr. Gladstone's Visit to All Souls* (Smith and Elder, 1908). He recorded many things that I had forgotten, though I helped him with the original compilation.

and his fourth premiership, and formed a very clear and careful conception of his individuality. I must confess that at the end of those ten days I had a much greater respect for him than I should have thought possible in my earlier years, though one got to know his limitations and his foibles, and to understand why many of those with whom he had been in contact had such a rooted dislike for him.

Gladstone was the only great figure from early Victorian times whom I had the fortune to study at ease. Palmerston died when I was only five, Lord John Russell survived twelve years longer, but invisible in extreme old age; Disraeli I might have seen, so far as chronology goes, since I was nineteen at the time of his decease: but it so chanced that I never set eyes on him. John Bright I heard twice upon the platform, but never had any personal touch with him. Lord Salisbury, whom I met many times, belonged to the next generation—he was late Victorian, not early Victorian. And I was equally unlucky with the great literary personalities of the age. Browning, a fairly frequent visitor to Oxford, where he gave his blessing to an enthusiastic 'Browning Society' formed in his honour, was the only one with whom I ever had converse. He was a great surprise—being affable and full of persiflage, not at all the utterer of obscure sayings in difficult verbiage whom I had expected to meet. Ruskin I saw, and listened to his last incoherent set of lectures, which had to be stopped by his friends before they were quite finished, so strange had they become. And I can remember the ludicrous anecdotes that were told of his last stay with friends in Broad Street, when his eccentric behaviour so much distressed Sir Henry Acland, that great collector of celebrities. But I never spoke to him face to face, or took his measure. I suspect that

there may be some among my younger readers to whom John Ruskin is a bare name, without much meaning behind it. It was different in the 1870's, when he could induce gangs of enthusiastic undergraduates to go out and commence road-making between Botley and North Hinksey. But the very ineffective work of these amateur picks and shovels disappeared in a few years, even as the spell which Ruskin's excellent prose exercised waned, when the majority of his readers discovered that it was eloquent, but nothing more.

All the more carefully, therefore, do I cherish the memory of association with the one of the great Victorians whom I was able to study at close quarters. Mr. Gladstone was elected an Honorary Fellow of All Souls in 1858, when he was still the representative of the University in Parliament, and the admired of all High Churchmen. It will be remembered that it was not till 1865, after his speeches about Irish Disestablishment, that his academic constituents discovered that he was unsound on ecclesiastical matters, and turned him out of his seat. In 1858, when All Souls decided to honour him, no suspicion of his future political developments could have been formed—and if he was a Whig, so were plenty of the fellows who voted for the distinction conferred upon him.

After his breach with his old constituents on the question of the Test Act, Gladstone—now M.P. for South Lancashire, Greenwich, or Midlothian—came much less frequently to Oxford, and remained *persona grata* only to a limited number of 'Liberal High Churchmen'. Twenty-five years elapsed before he again entered the common-room of the college of which he was an Honorary Fellow, though he from time to time paid formal calls on the Warden, Sir William Anson, when he chanced to be in Oxford. He knew that

Anson was a Whig of the 'old rock', though in the scission which rent his party in twain, concerning the Irish Home Rule Bill, the Warden had gone with the Liberal-Unionist minority, and not followed his old leader into the paths of Radicalism.

By 1890 Gladstone had been four years out of office—wrecked for ever, as his political opponents believed, by his alliance with the Irish Nationalists, and the hopeless failure of his Home Rule Bill. He was beginning to be regarded by Conservatives as an extinct volcano, and a sort of historic monument. He was now eighty-one, and few suspected that he was once more to become Prime Minister, and to rule the United Kingdom for a short space by means of the votes of the 'Celtic Fringe'. For my own part I seem to remember that, despite of old memories of Majuba Hill and Gordon at Khartoum, I was beginning to regard him as past mischief, one who had brought down nemesis on his own head, in short, who might serve

To point a moral and adorn a tale.

Rather a pathetic picture of fallen greatness was the way in which I summed him up, and I felt much less moral indignation against him than in the days of his last unfortunate ministry. I was far from suspecting, till I had seen him close, what vigour there still was in the old man. I imagine that my own feelings were much the same as those of many other Conservative or Liberal-Unionist members of the college.

About Christmas 1888 the Warden, hearing that Mr. Gladstone was on one of his infrequent visits to Oxford, asked him to tea, and invited several of the fellows to meet him. The tea-party passed off pleasantly, and at its end Sir William expressed a hope that the college might see more of its oldest honorary fellow.



Something like a year later we were a little surprised to hear that the Warden had received a letter from the old gentleman, to the effect that it would give him enormous pleasure if he might be allowed a privilege which (as he understood) other honorary fellows had enjoyed, and be permitted to spend a week in the college. 'This means,' he wrote, 'as I imagine, rooms, commons, hall and chapel, and such a vision of renovated youth has a great charm for me. I have put on a front of sevenfold brass to ask whether I really may come.'

The Warden tested the feelings of the more important fellows before making reply to this letter. Two, I know, were somewhat aghast. My dear old predecessor in the Chichele History chair, Montagu Burrows, a great Conservative organizer in his day, had been one of those who took a vehement part in getting Gladstone evicted from the University seat in Parliament twenty-five years back, and remained as convinced as ever that he was an evil influence. Professor Dicey, the most eminent of our law teachers, had been very energetic in far more recent times in holding our Honorary Fellow up to condemnation, after he had produced his Home Rule Bill of 1886. Dicey was the most furious and eloquent of Liberal-Unionists, and had spoken at scores of meetings against the time-serving politician who had broken up the grand old Liberal party. He could not think with patience of meeting over the hall dinner-table a man whom he had denounced in such sounding terms. The Warden talked over both Burrows and Dicey into a consent to make no formal opposition to the visit, though both of them expressed at first an intention of withholding their personal approval, and declared that they should keep out of the college so long as the author of so much evil was within its

walls. As we shall see, they did not abide by their first inclination.

So Sir William Anson was able to write to Mr. Gladstone to the effect that a visit from him would be welcome, that he should be put up in the most comfortable rooms that could be found in college, and that he should share in all the amenities of hall, common-room, and (what appealed perhaps most of all to our visitor) chapel. On January 29th he came to All Souls, and was lodged in the second story set of rooms in the back quadrangle on the staircase nearest to hall. This set was chosen because it was possible to pass from it both to the hall and the common-room without having to go out into the open air—a thing that might be a little dangerous in January or February to an old man of eighty-one in his dress clothes. I happened to be settled in the two rooms immediately below Mr. Gladstone, and was given by the Warden the rather vague but very responsible task of keeping an eye on him, in a general way, at night, and seeing that no harm came to him. This meant, I suppose, that if he were to be taken ill at any untoward hour, I should have been the person on whom he could have called for help. But he turned out to be singularly robust, and a sound sleeper.

It was on the afternoon of January 29th that the Warden brought Mr. Gladstone into the coffee-room at about 4.30, where were assembled the resident fellows and one or two non-residents who had been lured up from London by the news of the visit. I suppose that there must have been about twenty of us in all. Rather to my surprise, I noted that both Dicey and Burrows were present, in spite of their expressed resolve to stay away. I believe that the Warden had secured their attendance by urging that, since the college had

accepted the situation, it would be a marked piece of discourtesy if two of its most distinguished members, both known to be residents, should boycott the reception. Anyhow, there they were, and a most amusing incident followed.

My first glimpse of Mr. Gladstone took in the facts that he was not quite so tall as I had believed from seeing him at a distance, that his face was deeply lined, especially by the two long furrows that went from the corners of his nose to the outer ends of his mouth, that the curious upward twist of his eyebrows, shown in so many caricatures, had not been exaggerated, and that his hazel eyes were extraordinarily alert, sweeping round the room from face to face in the keenest fashion. It was delightful to find that he was true to type in his outer man—there were the short ‘Newgate fringe’ of hair below his close-shaven chin, the wide-opening ‘Gladstone collar’—necessitated by that fringe, I suppose—the frock coat, the bow tie, and the dangling eye-glass known to every student of *Punch* for the last twenty years. He was quite firm upon his feet, and moved easily, without any of the signs of stiffness that one expects at eighty-one. One extraordinary fact about his person I noticed, not at the first glance, but when I had been studying him minutely, from the corner into which I had judiciously withdrawn when so many of my seniors were present. His left hand was short of the two first joints of its forefinger. He generally kept the blunted digit under cover of its next neighbour, but occasionally, when in a moment of gesticulation he spread out both hands, it became quite visible, and attracted one’s attention. I found on inquiry from his contemporaries that he had blown this finger-tip off by accident, when quite a young man, while dragging a loaded fowling-piece through a

hedge, and incautiously holding it by the muzzle. I have never seen this maiming alluded to in any printed book, and I fancy it is still unknown to most people. No one ever alluded to it, to my knowledge. But what is most notable, and most creditable to English journalism, is that no caricaturist ever emphasized this little deformity. It would have been easy, if cruel and tasteless, to make sketches of the 'Old Parliamentary Hand', which was one of the well-known synonyms used by his critics, with the missing joint emphasized. I feel sure that any continental caricaturist would have exploited the malevolent jest without scruple.

We were standing in a rough semicircle, I suppose, when the Warden ushered Mr. Gladstone into the room. The eldest—alas, all long passed away—were Henry Bertie, our senior fellow, who had actually been at Eton with our visitor, but was (unlike him) far gone in physical decay, the two Chichele professors, Thomas Erskine Holland the lawyer, and Montagu Burrows the historian, men not so very much younger than our visitor himself. Sir William Markby, a Gladstonian Liberal, though a returned Anglo-Indian—not a usual combination; Albert Dicey, that most brilliant of legists and political writers; Wakeman, our ever genial bursar, and Thomas Raleigh, reader in English Law—the songster and chronicler of the college in those days. The juniors were C. R. L. Fletcher, whose admirable booklet has recalled these ancient days to every contemporary; Arthur Hardinge, our much-travelled young diplomatist, a perennial source of anecdote; Cosmo Lang, Hensley Henson, and Arthur Headlam—destined thirty years after to be respectively Archbishop of Canterbury, and Bishops of Durham and Gloucester—John Pemberton, Francis Bain, and F. H. Trench, the two last only just elected. There must

have been two or three more present: who they were I cannot recall. The Warden gave our names, and swept his hand round as he pointed out each of us to our visitor. Then came the amusing moment. On being shown his old foe Montagu Burrows, Mr. Gladstone exclaimed, 'Ah, Professor, it is one of the charms of Oxford that one meets at every moment someone with whose name in some branch of learning one has long been familiar.' This quite disarmed Burrows, who had been expecting a frigid glare. But the next move was even more amusing. Professor Dicey had retired into a remote corner of the room, desirous of escaping notice. But Gladstone stepped up to him, seized him by the hand, and began, 'Oxford is *too* interesting. I did not expect to have the opportunity of meeting *you*.' Dicey, quite taken aback, uttered one of those wordless gurgles, to which he was prone in moments of excitement, and was immediately confronted with a poser-question about the Law of the Constitution, on which he had been writing of late. He could not refrain from making a reply, and anon—when the junior fellows had been duly presented—was led off to a corner of a sofa, and had to explain the point at length to an apparently interested listener. This was almost *too* tactful, but it had its due effect.

Such a beginning was typical of all the eight days which Mr. Gladstone spent with us. He showed himself full of intellectual interests, and tackled everyone on his special study—sometimes showing himself delightfully behind the times in the views that he took on literature or history or music. The most interesting thing of all to note was his political talk: he was full of special and curious information about early Victorian days, but he could not be lured into discussion of the events of recent years—he quietly turned the subject

if some incautious youngster began to introduce queries about Irish Home Rule or the Sudan. One strong impression which I formed was that he still retained a very bitter personal dislike for Disraeli, whom I suspect that he regarded not only as an adventurer, but as an immoral politician and a hypocrite. Not that he ever said as much—the nearest that he got to it was a vague statement that certain influences in English politics had been ‘bad’, in the sense of demoralizing, in the recent generation. On the other hand, he had no objection at all to discussing the personalities of the statesmen of his early parliamentary days—the Melbourne–Peel period. Some of his judgments on them were surprising—he thought very little of Lord Grey, though he was so long the head of the Reforming party. On the other hand, he gave strong testimonials in favour of the administrative abilities of Mr. Herries—a Chancellor of the Exchequer whose name was barely known to me. He held that there was a good deal to be said in favour of the Duke of Wellington, and spoke with some enthusiasm of Cobden—a ‘most generous and sensitive man’, as well as of Sydney Herbert. I gathered that he still retained respect for Lord Aberdeen, under whom he had served for some time. But—and this is odd—I never heard him refer to Lord John Russell, and his verdict on Palmerston was not enthusiastic. His casual remarks on some other half-forgotten statesmen, such as Vansittart, Sir James Graham, and ‘Prosperity Robinson’ were interesting, in that they gave some sort of intelligible personality to individuals who had been nothing but names to me.

Gladstone was obviously well convinced of his own infallibility in things political and moral—a belief in which he had been long encouraged by his adoring wife and his many friends. That other people sometimes

failed to see any continuity in his views, and complained of inexplicable changes of opinion at various crises of his career, must have been incomprehensible to him. He always had followed his queerly constituted conscience—and it was a case of '*il n'y a que moi qui ai toujours raison*'. After studying him for eight days, I came to the conclusion that it would be absurd to call him (as many did) a hypocrite or a time-server. He was genuinely blind to his own inconsistencies, and could never understand how some people came to consider him unscrupulous. As one humorous enemy observed, if he had been detected playing cards with an extra ace up his sleeve, he would have been honestly convinced that Providence must have placed it there. It was the impression of perfect sincerity which he gave to his friends, and his undoubted power to dominate lesser minds, which made him such a power in politics. Unflinching self-confidence is a splendid asset, and so is a genuine conviction in the infallibility of one's own moral judgments. That Gladstone was ever consciously influenced by base motives I do not believe, but that his convictions were unconsciously warped by the political needs of the moment must be pretty clear to those who have studied his speeches and his actions. It is odd that he seems sometimes to have been able to hold two irreconcilable views at the same time, without detecting that they were incompatible with each other.

This is not, I suppose, the place for making a catalogue of his political inconsistencies, since I am only giving a sketch of his mental vagaries as I saw them developed during the eight days of his visit to All Souls. I can but illustrate the strange contradiction which he displayed in my own presence in regard to academic matters. On the one hand, he was all for a democratic university, and the *carrière ouverte aux talents* and the extension of

the teaching of Natural Science, but on the other he displayed a surprising regret for the disappearance of what most of us consider the least admirable characteristics of the Oxford that he knew in 1827 or 1830. To our intense amazement he lamented the cessation of the 'noblemen and gentlemen commoners' with their distinctive garb and privileges. 'Christ Church and the University in general, and I might add our social life, has suffered with their disappearance.' It was equally astonishing to find that he gravely deprecated the casual and sometimes shabby costume of many undergraduates, as he saw them in the street. 'It would have been impossible in my time. I remember my contemporaries, young men at Christ Church, who, when they were not out hunting, made a point of promenading the High Street in the most careful attire. Some of them kept a supply of breeches which they only wore for walking, and in which they never sat down, lest any creases should appear.' He obviously thought this much preferable to the modern laxity of dress. After he had given his celebrated lecture on Homer at the Union, I ventured to ask him how an undergraduate audience of 1890 differed from one of his own youth. He replied by citing a contrast not in matters mental or psychological, but in matters sartorial. The young men took no care of their personal appearance. 'In my young days there would have been men present who, with their two watch-chains, their scarf-pin, their embroidered waist-coats, and their fashionably cut suits, could not have been dressed for £30: this night I did not notice a single man who could not have been dressed for £10, and the general effect was slovenly.' He was struck with horror at seeing boating men running across the High in shorts, and still more at the way in which gowns were only worn for lecture or hall. He wore his own whenever



he went out of the Porter's Lodge, and was shocked to see professors and tutors passing from one college to another in the morning in the indecency of mufti. If he had lived a few years longer he would have seen undergraduates, and a not unfrequent tutor, smoking in academics. This sight, which would have caused him deep pain, he was fortunately spared.

One of his surprising idiosyncrasies was a dislike for ladies' colleges, which I detected on more than one occasion. This was all the more odd because one of his own daughters was a tutor at Newnham, Cambridge. He believed in all efforts to improve the education of women, but not in the idea of bringing them *en masse* to Oxford. I was once showing him round the Codrington Library, on the third day of his stay in All Souls, when the College Porter came ushering in Mrs. Gladstone, whom he had deliberately left in London—a fussy and adoring old lady with neatly waved hair. She told him that she had come to see that he did not over-exert himself, as she feared he was seeing too much company. He replied in most affectionate but humorous tones, 'that many people had been telling him that there were too many ladies in Oxford, since the ladies' colleges had been set up, and that if she wanted to carry him back to London at once, these people would consider themselves quite justified in their opinion. For the rest', he said, 'he was enjoying himself mightily, and did not think that such a pleasurable visit could be doing him any harm.' Mrs. Gladstone retired, with a final adjuration to him to do nothing rash. That same evening a lady, at dinner in Magdalen College, remarked to him that Mrs. Gladstone's visit must have been a pleasant surprise. 'Not at all, not at all, ma'am—there are far too many ladies in Oxford already,' was his rather startling reply.

Quite in consonance with Mr. Gladstone's other signs of academic conservatism was his regular attendance at morning chapel every weekday, and at both morning and evening chapels on the one Sunday that he was with us—February 2nd. His deep voice was regularly heard at every response, trailing a little behind those of the rest of the congregation, when a psalm-verse was a trifle long. Raleigh, then our dean, had remembered that our visitor regularly read one of the lessons in his own parish church at Hawarden, so sent him out to read the second lesson—Revelation xxi—at the Sunday morning service. He was evidently pleased at being treated like other fellows of the college, and being a practised elocutionist, acquitted himself wonderfully well, declaiming the stately verses about the Heavenly Jerusalem with great reverence and perfect articulation. Indeed, there is no doubt that his voice was not only clear, but pleasing, despite of a very slight Lancashire accent, detectable in some of his vowels. His clearness was particularly evident in his table-talk, of which one could catch every word. He was a splendid talker, and made our breakfasts in common-room, as well as our dinners in hall, and our protracted sessions over the wine in common-room, regular intellectual treats. He was not one of those prolix and incessant talkers who absorb all conversation, and leave no gaps for the queries or comments of others. Quite the reverse—he made our sittings debates and not lectures, and liked to hear and answer a plausible objection. And he was as courteous and considerate to the youngest as to the oldest interlocutor. I was able to put to him many a question whose answer was worth having—though I was not, perhaps, such a bold starter of topics as Cosmo Lang or Herbert Hensley Henson. I am bound to say that we were all—or nearly all—of us careful to avoid any

modern political subject of controversy: on the very few occasions on which they cropped up, he 'smiling put the question by'—with the ease of the 'old parliamentary hand', not with a truculent dictum calculated to make the unwise questioner uncomfortable.

His talk by no means prevented him from making a good dinner—I noticed that there were very few dishes which he waved aside—or from drinking his full share of the college port or claret in common-room. When the wine-coasters went round he did not let them slide by, but took his turn with the rest of us, even when he was in the middle of an anecdote. Indeed, he filled up his glass automatically, still talking away. This led to an absurd incident on one evening which I well remember. Mr. Gladstone was drinking claret—Trench, the 'screw' or junior fellow, whose duty it was to keep the decanters full, was so absorbed in listening to our visitor's observations, that he put a fresh bottle of port into the claret decanter. When it came round, Mr. Gladstone filled up his half-emptied glass of claret with the stronger liquor, and continued his narrative of the moment. When it was ended, he drunk off the half-and-half mixture, and then turning to the Warden said, 'Really, Mr. Warden, this claret of yours is of a *most* generous brand.' He then turned to drinking brown sherry, but whether because he thought that our claret was unnaturally alcoholic, or because he detected that some error had been made, I am not quite sure. I do not think that he would have claimed to be a judge of vintages, and he never talked about the wines that the college kept, or seemed to take more interest in one than in another.

All his generation knew that Mr. Gladstone was a good old-fashioned scholar in the classical tongues, and a considerable reader of English literature also. Homer

had been his special study; he had a line-for-line knowledge of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and had written a book about them called *Juventus Mundi*, which I suppose has been completely forgotten by now. Hence it was natural that much of his table-talk should be on classical literature—he seldom, as he said, had the opportunity of testing the views of an academical audience. It was interesting to find that he was about twenty years behind hand in the knowledge of Greek and Roman literary criticism. He believed that Merivale had written the last word on Roman history, and was apparently barely aware of the existence of Mommsen. And for Greek origins and Herodotus he entirely pinned his faith on Canon Rawlinson—Sayce he had just heard of, but had not evidently taken in any of his discoveries. He asked whether he was not a very young man. It is odd to reflect that the Professor, who is still happily with us, had obtained his degree in the sixties, and was already a well-established researcher of forty-five when Gladstone, in 1890, was taking him for a beginner. He was also under the impression that Henry Pelham was the Oxford authority on Greek history—a subject on which H. P. never wrote a word. This was hard on Pelham, who had been one of the most leading Liberals in this University for many a year, and was better acquainted with his great political chief than his chief was with him.

But the most distressing mishap about Gladstone's classical lore was that he had been asked to deliver a lecture at the Union, while he was staying with us, and unwisely determined to speak on Homer and modern Assyriological and Egyptological research. Now he had a splendid textual knowledge of Homer, but his knowledge of the work of modern Orientalist researchers was not only scrappy but a good many years behind

the times. And he had some hypotheses of his own, which were quite fantastical, about the connection of Assyrian and Egyptian myths with Homer's phraseology. The lecture would have been a more distressing business than it was, if any perceptible percentage of the undergraduate audience had possessed any knowledge of the topics discussed. As it was, they applauded, and passed him a warm vote of thanks, without any knowledge of what the talk had been about.

Two years after, Gladstone delivered a much better and sounder discourse to the University, as the first of the series of Romanes lectures. It was on Oxford and her schools in the Middle Ages, a subject on which he had both knowledge and interest, also (I may add) the guidance of Rashdall's first draft of his great book. This was an eloquent discourse, and was received with enthusiasm by a very large and representative audience. The undergraduates climbed over iron railings, and through windows, to hear even scraps of it. It was a worthy termination to the orator's long connection with his old University. I recall one absurd incident connected with it. Mr. Gladstone spoke from a desk placed on a low dais, erected for him on the floor of the Sheldonian Theatre. In the front row of listeners was a very aged and much-respected Evangelical clergyman, Canon Christopher, of St. Aldate's. Christopher was almost absolutely deaf, but retained some touch on the sounds of the world by means of a very large and long ear-trumpet, well known to the entire University. After straining his hearing for five minutes, and finding that he was getting no profit from the lecture, the good old canon took a most extraordinary step. Lifting up the chair on which he was sitting, a solid one, such as is prepared for magnates of the front row, he brought it forward to the very foot of Mr. Glad-

stone's pulpit, and mounted upon it in his gown, bringing his ear-trumpet to within two feet of the lecturer's mouth. The effect was as if he was levelling a big bell-mouthed blunderbuss at Mr. Gladstone's head, so large was the instrument. And this seems to have been the effect on the lecturer, who stepped back for a moment, as if he were expecting to be fired upon. After a short anxious peering downward, he detected what the machine really was, and resumed his lecture with much aplomb. Indeed, in one sweeping gesture towards the end of his oration, his outstretched hand knocked against the trumpet, and he was heard to exclaim, 'Oh! I beg your pardon!' I think the apology should have come from the other side, for Mr. Gladstone confessed, after the lecture, that the sudden appearance of what looked like a lethal weapon levelled at him had been disconcerting.

But this happened in 1892, two summers after the memorable visit of 1890, concerning which I have been taxing my memory. To return to my main subject, I must enlarge upon some more of the impressions which personal contact with Mr. Gladstone left upon my mind. It has somewhere been alleged, I forget by whom, that he was destitute of all sense of humour. This is quite a mistake. He had a very real sense of humour where other persons were concerned, or when his story had to do with mishaps or adventures of his own in which he played a creditable part. The jokes which he did not understand, or did not think funny, were those in which his sincerity or his infallibility were assailed by innuendo. This partial want of a sense of humour is common to most mortals: it is only a limited number of us who enjoy laughing at our own foibles.

Some of the humorous tales and epigrams which Mr.

Gladstone retailed in his table-talk were really worth recording. That concerning Queen Victoria and the old Duke of Cambridge's inveterate habit of swearing is well known now, though it was new to us in 1890. Less common property, I think, is a delightful remark about the propensity of adoring visitors to his home at Hawarden to carry off 'souvenirs', and of Liberal Clubs to present him with 'white elephant' memorial gifts. 'The operations of my admirers reduce themselves on the average, and in the long run, to a kind of balance. Some of them present me with things which they suppose that I want: others steal the things that I have.' He then described the precautions which had to be taken at Hawarden to prevent enthusiastic members of deputations from purloining the axes which he was accustomed to use in his celebrated tree-felling feats.

In a discussion on the merits and demerits of the English public schools, of which W. E. G. was a profound admirer, he gave the following summary of his reminiscences of Eton. 'When I was at my old school, there were four classes of boys. There was the idle and clever boy, and perhaps he had the best enjoyment of all out of his school-life. Then there was the idle and stupid boy, and he was well off too, for his idleness compensated for his stupidity. The clever and industrious boy was not so well off: he was made to do everyone's verses for them, and was generally treated as a beast of burden. But the worst of all was the stupid and industrious boy. He had nothing to compensate for his stupidity, since he never enjoyed the pleasures of idleness.'

I can remember also some amusing remarks about Poet-Laureate Pye, and one of the recent bishops of St. Andrews—both of whom wrote most touching obituary poems on the death of their wives, and

inscribed them on their tombs, with an implication that the sorrowing widower was soon to take his place also beneath the stone. Unfortunately both married again—the problem of how to make graceful explanation of the fact on the space that had been left below the name of the first wife was difficult. How Pye solved it may be seen on his immense monument in the church of Farringdon.

If I have said that with all his appreciation of humour Mr. Gladstone sometimes appeared to miss the point of a situation, I may quote in justification a tale of his which illustrates the foible excellently. We were talking after dinner in the common-room about the great High Churchmen of Gladstone's generation who went over to the Roman Communion—Manning and Newman. Concerning the latter he made the following dictum, which struck me as so characteristic that I have put it on record elsewhere.

'Mr. Gladstone remarked that we should consider it strange to be told that Cardinal Newman was unacquainted with the works of Dante. "The proof which I can give of it is this: the last time that I visited my old friend at the Oratory, I took the opportunity of telling him that I considered his *Dream of Gerontius* the most striking glimpse of the other world that had been conceived since the *Paradiso*. I was proceeding to enlarge upon this theme, and to pay my testimony to his literary ability, when he abruptly changed the topic of conversation. From this I can only conclude that he knew nothing about Dante.'" Obviously it had not struck Mr. Gladstone that the Cardinal, the shyest of men, might have a modest reluctance to have his own works belauded at length, and might wish to get off on to some less personal subject of conversation. I imagine that Gladstone himself was well accustomed



to be praised to his face, by an admiring circle of relations and friends, and saw nothing objectionable in it. That such forms of adulation might be distasteful to other persons thus worshipped, had not occurred to him.

I must note in his favour, however, that he was not at all given to self-laudation, or to stories in which he had the noble *rôle*. Quite the reverse—he never praised himself, though he had no objection to have other people pay him the tributes which he was conscious of deserving. A little like Aristotle's *μεγαλόψυχος* he bore himself high and emprisedly, because he was conscious of his own merits, but he would never be guilty of boasting or of self-advertisement. The one thing that would irritate him was to find low or selfish motives ascribed to him, to account for actions that were the results of the workings of conscience or of his conceptions of duty. But we at All Souls were very careful to keep off all the common topics of Conservative journalism, and had our reward in seeing the old man at his best.

I suppose that it was due to this caution on our part that discussions on religious subjects formed so small a part of the table-talk, when he was dining or breakfasting with us. He was aware that many different shades of churchmanship were represented in the college, from Montagu Burrows's anti-ritualistic views at one end to Wakeman's strong Anglo-Catholicism at the other, and that controversy might easily arise—which for the sake of good-fellowship and pleasant converse he was anxious to avoid. When we did hap upon matters of ecclesiastical moment, it was always on external things, not on dogma, that we found ourselves in argument. Mr. Gladstone spoke repeatedly on the necessity of the State professing a religion, and for

the matter of that the University too. He valued Oxford as a power counteracting the deplorable effect which the absence of any official recognition of religion must have on young men. I fancy that he regretted the modern slackness which allows the substitution of roll-call for chapel, even for those who have not repudiated their membership of the Church of England. Of course Presbyterians, Roman Catholics, Jews, or Moslems could not be required to attend chapel. But why should the conforming majority not recognize their obligations? He feared that it was from mere slackness. As an example of a similar tendency to forget the excellent rule about keeping the Sabbath holy, he instanced the giving of entertainments on Sunday.

He could just remember the time when Society was very careless about such things—a survival from the generation when George III had to rebuke the wife of the Archbishop of Canterbury for giving Sunday ‘routs’. But ‘he had lived out of, and again into’, the period when it is the fashion to give Sunday entertainments. As a convinced adherent of the two services on Sunday practice, he deplored modern tendencies. The ‘week-end’ habit was only beginning in 1890, or Mr. Gladstone would no doubt have found something to say about it. He was depressed by the lessening attendance in church all over the country: using the curious phrase that as he was himself ‘a denominationalist and a dogmatist,’ he thought that all good churchmen should give witness to their adherence to their own denomination, and show public assent to its doctrines, by regularly attending their parish services, and rehearsing their creed every Sunday. At Hawarden he himself set a blameless example in this respect, as everybody knows, and loved to read the lessons. Wherefore he was sincerely pleased when our dean

asked him, as I have mentioned before, to officiate at the lectern on Sunday.

Such were the impressions which I formed of Mr. Gladstone, after continuous touch with him for many days, and conversations at almost every meal. As I have observed already, he was a marvel of alertness and vigour—the only point in which his well-compacted frame was beginning to fail him, was a slight deafness. When conversing with ‘mumblers’, or people with very low-pitched voices, he would occasionally ask for a repetition of his interlocutor’s last remark, or even get it wrong, and deliver his answer on some quite different topic. This was not his fault—it was only with those who did not speak out clearly that he ever got into difficulties. I found myself never incommoded in the least by his deafness in many talks with him. As my narrative sufficiently demonstrates, he was courteous, elaborately tactful, and never inclined to domineer—though his reputation—quite without any intention on his part—sometimes led the listeners to refrain from controversy owing to diffidence. But this was not his fault—he never resented an objection or an interruption, and was always ready to deal with it in good parliamentary style. He was obviously very happy to find himself in the centre of a society quite unlike that of his domestic adulators, and to exchange quips and cranks with such exceptional junior fellows as Lang or Henson, not to speak of others of less outstanding vitality.

The general impression produced upon us all was that—despite of all the prejudices against him, which had possessed us before we met—he was perfectly sincere and honest, and a genuine believer in his own right-mindedness. On contemplating some of his actions and speeches, one finds much difficulty in

accepting this estimate of him, but I believe that it is the correct one. It must have required a very odd mind, and a still odder conscience, to account for many of his shifts of policy: but I think that we must allow that he was 'built that way', and that he never sinned against what he considered to be the light. His long and distinguished political career had undoubtedly tended to inspire him with a belief in his own infallibility, which was strengthened by the adulation of his admiring *entourage*. To parody an epigram once applied by the Duke of Wellington to himself and his ducal ways, I think that we must believe that the 'Grand Old Man' ended by saying to himself, 'I am William Ewart Gladstone, and must do as William Ewart Gladstone doth'. The course which seemed to him at the moment to be right *must* be right, though other people might detect in it opportunism, Macchiavellianism, and hypocrisy. And from the subjective point of view he was justified—though from the point of view of history many critics will persist in deciding that his career was an unfortunate one for his country.

## CHAPTER V

### THE LAST CIVIL WAR IN SWITZERLAND

SEPTEMBER 11-12, 1890

**I**N the autumn after I had been taking care of Mr. Gladstone during his nine days' stay in All Souls College, I was destined to be a witness of a very curious historical phenomenon. When I declare that I was an eye-witness of the last civil war in Switzerland—I mean, of course, a real civil war, not a riot accompanied by some shooting, such as was recently seen in Geneva—I am generally met with quiet incredulity, sometimes with derision. No ordinary person believes that the Swiss are interested in any political problems save the protection of their independence against possible French or German intrusion in the time of a great European war. Elderly people are aware that a very large Swiss force was mobilized, and on the frontier, during the winter of 1870-71, when Bourbaki made his attempt to turn the German eastern flank by pushing up along the border-line, and was finally intercepted and thrust into Switzerland, where he found an ample force ready to disarm and intern his starving host. A still larger army was ready all through the later years of the recent Great War, when the Swiss suspected, perhaps not without reason, that the Germans might be tempted to turn the French eastern flank and the fortress of Belfort by an excursion across the curiously irregular north-western corner of the Cantons of Basle and Berne.

But putting aside this all-important and very natural obsession, very few people believe that the Swiss are interested in other things save that dominating problem the management of the *Fremdenindustrie*, as it is called—the exploitation of the tourist—in an age when facilities for travel have grown so great that wanderers press much farther afield than was the case forty years ago. The class of people who once went to the Lake of Geneva or the Lake of Lucerne are now to be found in Tunis, Majorca, or Egypt. The ambitious sort of climber, who once cut his way up the Matterhorn, and wrote a book about it, is now to be found on Kinchinjunga or Ruwenzori. Switzerland once enjoyed almost a monopoly of the attention of the tourist; she has now to compete with a hundred rivals, and must do so by careful attention to advertisement and organization. This view of the Swiss as the exploiters of tourists is, of course, a comic exaggeration of one side of the mentality of some of them: but it is the one most obvious to the man in the car, or the man in the train, who has no knowledge of, or interest in, history.

Of course, the students of political philosophy and constitutional evolution know a great deal more of Switzerland and her problems than does the tourist, and will dilate on the questions of Federalism and Centralism, on *Staatenbund* and *Bundestaat*, on the origin and efficiency of the Referendum, and its applicability to countries other than the one where it was invented, on varying views as to the theory of capital punishment, and such-like topics. But the political philosopher sometimes seems to me to be less interested than he should be in the details of the hard facts of civil strife and armed contention, and to be drawing his morals, in many cases, without a complete knowledge of the underlying circumstances which lead

to the results which he is contemplating. If one reads that admirable book, Lord Bryce's *Modern Democracy*, one finds therein many pages on Switzerland and its problems, but little about the petty civil wars of the XIXth Century, of which I was privileged (by mere chance) to behold what I trust will prove to have been the very last. For I once saw a Swiss civil war, and was not aware of what I was seeing.

To those who glide along the picturesque roadways and waterways of Switzerland, encompassed by the obsequious if expensive attentions of the keepers of hotels and garages, the fact is completely unknown that the Swiss are probably the most pugnacious people in Europe—with the possible exception of the Irish. Their vague knowledge of Swiss history starts with the myth of William Tell, whose image, son, and apple they have seen on so many pedestals and hotel fronts. Is he not enshrined in Schiller's drama and Meyerbeer's opera? This is the embodiment of the 'virtuous mountaineer' theory, which starts Switzerland with a revolt against feudal Austrian oppression. As a matter of fact, the remote origins of the cantonal history begin with a gratuitous attack of the men of Schwyz upon the cattle and lands of their wealthy neighbour the Abbot of Einsiedeln, who called in his Hapsburg overlord to his help. And the so-called 'Austrian' army of Morgarten was mainly composed of the levies of Zug, Winterthur, Zurich, and other places which were soon afterwards to join the Mountain Cantons to their ultimate profit. All through the XIVth and XVth Centuries Swiss history is made up as much of civil strife as of war with the Hapsburgs or the Dukes of Savoy and Burgundy. And when the Reformation split up Europe in the early XVIth Century, it split up also the heterogeneous collection of old-cantonal units,

allied units, and subject units, which we call for convenience Switzerland. Two-thirds of the units went into the new movement, and became Zwinglian or Calvinist: the remaining third remained in devoted adherence to the old Church. The division had nothing to do with language or with original historical connections: French-speaking Geneva and Valais chose opposite sides; German-speaking Berne and Lucerne were the leaders of the two rival sections. The arrangement facilitated civil wars, already so prevalent, on a new set of divisions. Everyone knows how Zwingli, the founder of North Swiss Protestantism, was actually in the field, though a minister of religion, and died by the halberd of a Lucerne magistrate on the battlefield of Kappel. This was a very typical incident.

When the growth of the great Renaissance monarchies, the Hapsburg and the Valois powers, put an end to the expansion of the bounds of the Swiss Confederates in the XVIth Century, the pugnacity which had hitherto been utilized in foreign conquest, when domestic strife was not too interesting, had to find vent in mercenary service. Two dreadful disasters in the great Italian wars had demonstrated to the Cantons that their pikemen could not march all over Europe victorious. But they remained the best infantry of their day, and were hired with eagerness by the monarchs of the Renaissance. Mercenary guards were normally Swiss—'What-ho! my Switzers!' cries Shakespeare's King of Denmark, when in danger of his life. An Elizabethan dramatist would naturally suppose that a continental king's hired myrmidons would be Swiss. Certainly those of the King of Spain and the King of France and the Pope were—why not those of Claudius at Elsinore?

In the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries Swiss pug-



nacity found vent in mercenary service, wherever there was good money to be got—for, of course, *point d'argent point de Suisse*! And this went on well into the XIXth Century in the Spanish and Neapolitan and Papal armies: we had ourselves a Swiss regiment—Watteville's—in the time of the Napoleonic Wars, when the British Army acquired so many small foreign additions. But in Switzerland itself the occupation of civil war, a little disused in the XVIIIth Century—though there had been some minor troubles—was in full swing from the outbreak of the French Revolution onward. When the French invaded Switzerland under the Directory, it was nominally to help a vigorous insurrection of the people of Vaud against their Bernese suzerains. And though Napoleon imposed a sort of peace by his 'Act of Mediation' of 1803, by which all Swiss districts were placed on a footing of equality by the creation of new Cantons—or at least all Swiss districts which he did not annex to France for his own convenience, such as Geneva and Valais—this settlement was by no means the end of trouble.

After Napoleon's fall, when the conservative and oligarchical parties got control in many Cantons, there was a long period of intermittent strife, not only between Cantons of different political tendencies, but inside the Cantons themselves, between the aristocratic and radical parties. The Central Government was weak—the Diet was not a legislative assembly, but a meeting of delegates from many sovereign states, and there was no President of the Republic. Each Canton had not only its own laws and administration and coinage, but its own private civil wars, in which the Diet could not intervene with authority. These were sometimes mere riots, but sometimes regular military contests, as in Canton Basle in 1833, where there was a handsome

fight (with artillery engaged) between the city of Basle and its rural Communes. You may see some interesting contemporary pictures of it in the town museum to this day. It ended absurdly, by the state being divided into two separate sovereign half-cantons, Basel-Staat and Basel-Land, each with half a vote in the federal organization. The Radical party in Lower (French-speaking) Valais overran Upper Valais (the German-speaking part of the Canton) and forced it to accept a constitution in 1840. In 1839 the Conservative and orthodox faction in Canton Zurich stormed that city, after considerable shooting, and set up a new government displacing the Radicals. In 1844 the Lucerne Radicals made two vigorous but unsuccessful attempts to capture Lucerne city and overthrow a Catholic régime. These were only samples of normal irritation between parties, which often got no farther than rioting, but as often led to real fighting.

But in 1847 there befell the greatest, if not quite the last, of the Swiss civil wars—probably the only one of which the majority of English students have ever heard. This is called the War of the Sonderbund, or 'Counter-Confederacy', and has a curious resemblance in outward aspect to the great American Civil War of 1861-65. For, just like that struggle, it was really a fight for State rights against Federalism, though it took the form of a moral dispute. The American Civil War had the suppression of slavery as its dominating issue—the War of the Sonderbund had as its *casus belli* a religious dispute, between the Anti-Clerical and Radical majority of the Cantons, and the Catholic minority of seven—Lucerne, Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden, Freiburg, Zug, Valais—which stood for their right to harbour the Jesuits and other communities, and to impose religious tests. Canton Valais had actually a constitution forbidding all Protestant forms of worship. Unlike the

American struggle, this was short and sharp. The Catholics, though fighting against three to one odds, relied on the strength of their mountains and passes, and secret promises of help from Austria and other reactionary Powers. But they were overrun in a campaign of only three weeks—geographical difficulties having prevented any proper concentration of their forces—and after a defeat in front of Lucerne (November 24, 1847) they capitulated.

This meant the decisive victory of a centralizing policy over the particularist policy of cantonal autonomy—if also and incidentally the victory of Radical and lay mentality over Catholicism. The Constitution which was enacted by the victorious party in 1848 created a Federal Executive, a Federal Assembly with legislative power, and a Federal Tribunal for appeals from cantonal courts. The Executive was given charge of foreign relations, the Army, external customs duties, and the coinage, which was unified, the Cantons ceasing to coin local money valued in different currencies—rappen, batzen, lire, and francs, as might be. But the Cantons were left in charge of local legislation, police, domestic rates and taxes, education, highways, etc. For the first time since the Swiss units were made into a constitutional organization by Napoleon's 'Act of Mediation' there was something that might be called a real central authority.

It is not my intention to go into the subsequent changes in Swiss political usage—you may read about the Referendum and the demand for 'popular initiative' in the text-books. What I have to tell about is the last Swiss civil war—a belated strife in arms, accompanied by bloodshed, between the old Catholic and Radical parties, in the most abnormal of all the Cantons, Ticino, the one wholly Italian unit in the

Federation. This was the sort of explosion that was common enough before the War of the Sonderbund, but seemed a perfect anachronism in 1890. But it was quite true to type; it reads exactly like a phenomenon of the 1840's. By the merest chance I happened to be a witness of it.

In most of the old German-speaking Cantons of the former Sonderbund the local government has been quietly Catholic for time out of mind. Quarrels with the Federal Government there have been occasionally, e.g. at the time when, after the Vatican Council of 1870, the so-called 'Old Catholic' movement against Papal infallibility was patronized by the Federal authority and execrated by the orthodox. But this quarrel died down after the death of Pio Nono. Practically cantonal government—all local as opposed to national administration—was permanently in the hands of the Catholics wherever they were in a clear majority, as in the hands of the Radicals or Liberals wherever the Catholics were in a decided minority.

Now in 1890 I happened to be returning from a very short autumn vacation tour in Italy, as I had often done before, and my last stage before the long run direct to London, by the St. Gothard line, was the romantically situated town of Bellinzona, the cantonal capital of Ticino. It is a lovely place, at the outlet of the long valley where the rapid river, which gives the Canton its modern name, emerges from the passes into the flat plain at the head of Lago Maggiore. On three isolated hills above the town rise three separate XVIth-Century castles, picturesque ruins. They recall the time when the Swiss of the three Forest Cantons came over the Gothard and conquered certain scraps of the duchy of Milan from the Sforzas. For the three Cantons held their conquest in common, and each kept a castle

on one of the dominating heights, to vindicate their rights not only against the Milanese dukes but against each other—for Swiss Cantons were supremely jealous communities. For three centuries the Lombards of the so-called 'Italian bailiwicks' were the subjects of Uri, Schwyz, and Underwalden, without any political rights. It was only Napoleon's Act of Mediation which turned them into a free Canton and made them equal with their conquerors.

The future of this corner of Alpine Lombardy was rather problematical from 1799 to 1803—it might have occurred to Buonaparte to put it back into Italy, and give it to the Cisalpine Republic, the newly created Italian state. Indeed, he did this with the Valtelline, the other scrap of Lombard territory which the Swiss had conquered in the XVth Century. But, for reasons rather inscrutable, he left Bellinzona and Lugano and Locarno and the rest of the neighbouring lands to the Helvetic Confederation, though they project in a most curious fashion into the midst of Italian boundaries. One might have expected that the Ticinese would have preferred to become Lombards again, after three centuries of servitude to the Forest Cantons. But this does not seem to have been their wish; they appear to have preferred to keep the Swiss connection, rather than to fall back into their natural status. Probably the memories of the long years when their kinsfolk in the Milanese duchy had been misgoverned, first by Spanish and then by Austrian rulers, may have convinced them that it would be more tolerable to be an independent Swiss Canton than to become a part of the Cisalpine Republic, or of Napoleon's kingdom of Italy, or still more of that kingdom of Lombardo-Venetia which the Austrians took for themselves after the collapse of the Napoleonic Empire.

I never heard a modern Ticinese express any desire to be quit of his Swiss citizenship and to become an Italian—though I have heard Italians (who love the theories of natural boundaries and of racial affinities) declare that Canton Ticino is an abominable anomaly. Be that as it may, this region has existed since 1803 as a free Swiss community, though it is entirely Italian speaking, and is separated from the rest of the Helvetic State by the main chain of the Alps. The people look like Lombards, the houses are of the southern type, and one seldom hears a word of German spoken.

Now Canton Ticino has been from the first rather divided in political feeling: the Catholic party had always been dominant; but, though there were no Protestants, there had always been a very considerable Radical minority. This had been big enough to prevent Ticino from joining the other Catholic Cantons in the Sonderbund War of 1847, but for forty years it had never been able to get any part in the cantonal administration. In the later XIXth Century the Radicals were chafing very much at perpetual exclusion from office, because they were conscious that they were a growing party. I think that the enormous development of the Canton as a tourist centre, after the opening of the Gothard railway in 1882, had something to do with this. It brought into Lugano, Locarno, and Bellinzona a number of pushing people with ideas of exploiting opportunities and making profitable improvements, who found themselves in collision with a rather stick-in-the-mud, old-fashioned Clerical administration.

The particular grievance which seems to have been rankling about 1890 was what we call 'jerrymandering', i.e. the deliberate management of the limits of constituencies, so that small valleys with a clear majority

for the old régime had as many votes as growing urban communities with a much larger population, and that boundaries were cut through a district, so that local Radical majorities were dispersed among 'safe' neighbouring Catholic units. There were twenty-one in all of these constituencies. In spite of this, the Radicals were hoping to gain many seats in the election of 1890. But the officials in charge of the polling booths declared that there were small majorities in favour of the Clerical candidate in the larger number of them. The ridiculous general result was that 12,600 Catholic voters had secured seventy seats, and 12,000 Radical voters only thirty! The Radicals openly declared that the figures had been 'cooked', and that in dozens of constituencies false balloting papers had been smuggled in. They had numerous minor grievances—the most important was that the Cantonal Treasurer was said to have embezzled 100,000 francs of public money, but was not being put upon trial. Their agitation took shape in a petition for the election of a Constituent Assembly to revise the whole electoral law of the Canton. This was naturally rejected by the 'Council of State' now in office.

Convinced that they would get no satisfaction by constitutional means, the Radicals resolved to execute a *coup d'état*, to evict the Catholic office holders, to instal a new Government, and to hold an election for a Constituent Assembly. It was on this *coup d'état* that I happened to chance in my travels.

Early in the morning of September 11th a great many men with rifles were drifting into Bellinzona, and gathering in the streets. This did not surprise me at all, for some of the commonest sights in Switzerland are the annual shooting competitions—*Schützenfest*, *Tir Fédéral*, or *Tiro Federale*, according as you are in

a German-speaking, a French-speaking, or an Italian-speaking Canton. These gatherings attract hundreds of competitors, and a sort of fair springs up in the outskirts of the town in which the show is going on. Nothing could be less suggestive of a revolution in Switzerland than a considerable gathering of men with rifles—it never entered into my head for some time that in this charming tourist centre I was likely to hap upon armed violence. It is true that the incomers seemed rather excited, and that I could see no signs of a fair, but this did not set me thinking.

Presently there was a large armed mob collected, and it suddenly commenced to act in a systematic way. This, I am told, was when its leaders presented themselves: they had entered the town on the night before disguised as commercial travellers, and had kept quiet till the appointed moment, when there had been hours enough for their outlying partisans to drift into the town and join the local nucleus. On the appearance of the chiefs, shouts were raised, mainly 'Al basso ai preti!' ('Down with the priests!'), and occasionally 'Al basso il cretinismo ultramontano!' ('Down with the idiocy of the ultramontanes!'). The raising of these political cries by the crowd was surprising, but no one acquainted with workaday Switzerland could have foreseen what was coming.

The mob divided into two parties. The smaller one pounced on the cantonal arsenal, where the director and his staff were taken wholly by surprise—he was at his *déjeuner* I believe—and allowed themselves to be shut up without resistance. The main body, however, plunged for the central square, cheering loudly. I am told that on their way they cleared out a popular restaurant where some of the cantonal officials, and also some of the gendarmes in charge of the



municipal buildings, were caught at lunch and made prisoners.

They then made for the Palazzo Cantonale, or Government House; there was then a noise of firing audible—it was confused, neither like a volley nor the regular pop! pop! of a shooting match—and before very long it ceased, and the streets became full of excited people brandishing their rifles and cheering.

What had happened was that the Radicals, several thousand strong, had rushed the Palazzo Cantonale. The legitimate authorities, who seem to have been taken entirely by surprise by the *coup d'état*, had not had time to call in their partisans, or even to collect all the gendarmes in the town. They had done no more than close and bar the outer iron doors. A local Radical leader, so I am told, stood before the gates and called out, 'Make way for the People', to which reply was made by two of the members of the clerical Council of State, who appeared on the balcony, and shouted down that they represented the law and bade rioters disperse. This was answered by an assault with sledge-hammers on the iron gates and a scattering fire of rifle and revolver bullets at the windows. Some say that there were revolver shots from inside in reply; others say that the gendarmes made scarcely any resistance and bolted by a back passage. But there certainly was a general rush through the broken doors, with a lot of firing, and one of the leading Catholic members of Council, a lawyer named Rossi, was shot dead, and the rest of the officials found in the palace maltreated and imprisoned. Altogether, I believe, there were at most two or three people killed, and the whole affair could not be called bloody. But undoubtedly it was a revolution, and one of a quite familiar continental type. Thirty or forty Clericals at least were clapped into the

cantonal prison, and were kept there for some thirty-six hours.

It is, we know, nowhere so easy to collect an armed mob as in Switzerland. For with the short universal militia service, which forms the military organization of the Helvetic Confederacy, everyone is accustomed to arms. And in a mountainous canton, like Ticino, almost everyone is accustomed to go a-shooting in the hills, where game abounds, and everyone has his sporting gun. Nothing could be more convenient for the organizers of an insurrection. But since the War of the Sonderbund, more than forty years back, insurrections were generally thought to be old-world phenomena, which were never expected to recur again. Apparently the Clerical cantonal authorities had not dreamed of a rising, or they could have collected thousands of their partisans, who would have been quite ready to defend what they considered the cause of law, order, and religion. But they were absolutely surprised by the *coup d'état*—as much surprised as I was.

After the Radicals had stormed the Government buildings, they held a sort of irregular (and wholly unconstitutional) public meeting, which voted for, and installed in the Palazzo Cantonale, a 'provisional Government' composed of the leaders who had directed the *coup d'état*, all well-known local party men. This Government proclaimed that a new cantonal election should be held—the recent one (as they said) having been grossly jerrymandered—and the new Cantonal Council should be a 'constituent' one, i.e. should have power to revise the Constitution and all its details. They announced also that the late Clerical ministers should be impeached for maladministration. The whole affair was rather more orderly than might have been

expected. When the firing was over, I did not hear that unpopular Clericals were mobbed, or their houses burnt—though something of the sort did occur, as I am told, in the neighbouring town of Lugano, just across the hills, where I believe that there were some cases of incendiarism and maltreatment, if not of murder. The streets that afternoon were full of the victorious Radicals, who had opened, and armed themselves from, the cantonal arsenal, where there were plenty of rifles and even some artillery. They had met with no opposition there, the officer in charge having been surprised and shut up without any violence. Flags with the red, white, and green cantonal colours were flying in every street; 'Al basso ai preti', the Radical slogan, was being chalked up at every corner, and drunk as a toast in every restaurant and beer-house.

It was really a very mild revolution as revolutions go, and not unduly noisy, if I compare it with my memories of other movements of the kind in other Southern countries—of which I shall have to tell later. The best evidence of this is that it had been some time before I, a normal tourist, well acquainted with Swiss ways, had recognized that it was a revolution at all, and not the beginnings of a rather lively *Schützenfest*. Of course, one expected that Italo-Swiss would be more explosive and noisy than German-Swiss.

The oddest thing was that the trains on the St. Gothard railway continued to run without a hitch in spite of the revolution. I went on next day by the early express, leaving a very lively and jubilant town behind me. Of what was to be the outcome I had not the least idea, though obviously the whole movement had been illegal in the highest degree, and the Central Government would probably have something to say.

But I had no expectation of how quick and drastic its interference would be. Very soon, however, I began to run into signs of trouble. After Göschenen and the great tunnel at the head of the Pass, which separates the waters of the Ticino from those of the Reuss, we were continually being halted, at every station where there was a double line of rails, in order to allow troop trains to pass, heading southward. The Central Executive of the Confederation at Berne had acted with a decision and efficiency that could hardly have been expected, considering the absolutely unprecedented phenomenon—unknown for forty years—of an armed revolution. It appointed a Federal Commissioner, one Colonel Künzli, and sent him down to Bellinzona with three thousand men at his back, before the troubles were thirty-six hours old. The first troops were two regiments of Bernese militia, who could easily be mobilized in the capital and its neighbourhood, and were neither Catholics nor Radicals, and so had no predispositions in the local strife. Colonel Künzli half expected armed resistance when his first train reached Bellinzona on the afternoon of September 12th, but it was not forthcoming. He proclaimed martial law, or its Swiss equivalent, released the Clerical ministers from the prison, and evicted the Radical administration, which had reigned for a day and a half!

This sudden interference of the Central Executive in a cantonal affair would have been incredible in earlier times, and the swiftness of its action was only made possible by the existence of the Gothard line and its great tunnel, then only eight years old, for this marvellous work had only been completed in 1882. Before it existed it would have taken many days to transport troops from the nearest point on a railway system to the remote transalpine region of Ticino. They would

have had to march over the old post-road from Alpnacht and Altdorf, over the Devil's Bridge, to Airolo and the descent into the Italian valleys. This would have been a matter of three or four days at least, while actually (I suppose) the first troop trains reached Bellinzona within thirty hours of the insurrection. Possibly the Central Executive may have had warnings that trouble in Ticino was at hand, and may have had a scheme of action drawn out long before the outbreak. It is hard to explain in any other way the extraordinary swiftness and drastic nature of its action, which was certainly most creditable.

The Federal Commissioner and his troops having evicted the ephemeral Radical Government, the Clericals demanded that their ministry should be replaced in power, as the only legal authority in the Canton. This the Federal Government refused to permit—whereupon the Clericals put themselves in as open opposition to the central power as were the Radicals. For the late ministers reassembled, and began to issue administrative orders against the Radical usurpers of power. Thereupon Colonel Künzli, seeing that it looked as if he might be let in for a 'triangular duel'—since both factions were incensed at the Federal Government for refusing to recognize either as having a legal status—asked for and received from Berne three more regiments of northern militia. This show of overwhelming force—there were now nearly ten thousand troops ready to support the Commissioner—brought the factions to a more peaceful frame of mind.

The leaders of both parties were sent for to Berne, and finally agreed to allow of a plebiscite on the necessity of a revision of the Cantonal state-system. It produced an absurdly equal balance of votes—11,900 voting for revision, 11,700 against it! Obviously

the parties were so nearly alike in numbers that neither could fairly claim to have complete control of the Canton. The plan of reconciliation adopted was that the old Clerical Government should be formally replaced in power, but agree to abdicate at once, and allow of the introduction of what we should now call proportional representation, i.e. the creation of large constituencies in which each party should have representation in consonance with the actual number of its voters. The practical effect was that instead of the Catholic party enjoying a perpetual term of office, as it had for many years, and suppressing all criticism by force of an overwhelming majority of delegates in the Cantonal Assembly, there came to be a balance between the parties, since their voting power and their representation in the Chamber were so equal. The first Government under the new system had three Clerical and two Radical members—how they divided official and administrative posts I do not know. But certainly I have never again heard of insurrection in Ticino, though I have passed through it dozens of times since September 1890. On the last occasion that I made a halt in the Canton, about 1926, I found that the revolution of September 1890 had been almost forgotten. I made inquiries, but, when I tried to get detailed reminiscences, it did not seem a popular topic of conversation, and I had to drop the subject.


There was, if I remember aright, some attempt made to arrest the Radical leaders who had been prominent in the storming of the Cantonal Palace and the shooting of Signor Rossi. But they moved out of the district, with or without the connivance of the Federal authorities. The most prominent of them, a man named Castioni, who was alleged to have been the actual murderer of the councillor, fled to London. On his extradition being

demand, the Court of Queen's Bench refused to grant it, on the old plea of the habitual immunity of political exiles in Great Britain. The Federal Government then dropped the matter. Switzerland had sheltered so many political assassins in past years—Russians in particular—that she could hardly protest against another country granting a similar right of asylum. Moreover, it was obviously politic not to end this unhappy business with sensational trials, and heavy sentences on prominent Radicals, which would have rankled for years in the minds of their friends all over Switzerland. For all that I know, Castioni and his friends may have returned to their homes after a decent interval, when no one was anxious to stir up old hatreds.

I have been in all an eye-witness of four civil wars. This one in Ticino was certainly the shortest, the most orderly, and the least sanguinary of them—as might have been expected from Swiss insurgents—compared with the Portuguese, Spanish, and Italian disturbers of the peace, whom I saw in action in after years.

Indeed, the memory of this curious little affair stays by me mainly as a humorous reminiscence. I saw a revolution start, and I mistook it for a *Schützenfest*—which is obviously absurd. But it must be remembered that no reasonable tourist could possibly have expected to come on an armed revolt in a popular tourist centre in peaceful Switzerland, where nothing of the kind had been seen since the Sonderbund War of 1847. Without a knowledge of Ticinese cantonal politics and their bitterness, no one could have expected to be confronted with this phenomenon. And I much doubt if a single Englishman existed in 1890 who could have given a succinct account of the relation of the Catholic and Radical parties in that lovely region during the pre-

ceding ten years, though thousands of English tourists were pouring through it, over the Gothard line, in endless procession since 1882. I wonder how many Englishmen to-day have ever heard of the little drama which I was privileged to observe! I should conceive that it would be more like one in a hundred thousand than one in a thousand. Even in Oxford, which keeps a keen eye on political anomalies, I should imagine that the number would be very small indeed. Indeed, I suspect that if I had not seen this revolution myself I should never have heard of it.





## CHAPTER VI

### A GLIMPSE OF CZAR NICHOLAS II OF RUSSIA AND THE GREAT REIMS REVIEW

SEPTEMBER 21, 1901

IT is difficult nowadays to take one's memory back to those last years of Queen Victoria when Russia and France were the Powers on whom English statesmen kept a watchful eye, before the time in which the vagaries of William of Hohenzollern had become the all-important topic of discussion. We were still obsessed with the idea of the Russian menace to India, and we had twice been on the verge of open rupture with France on questions of colonial policy. Few now remember the 'Fashoda Incident' of 1898, or the dispute about Siam in 1893, which seemed at one time even more dangerous to Anglo-French relations than Colonel Marchand's uncalled-for appearance at Fashoda. Indeed, during the time of Lord Salisbury's two ministries, 1886-1892 and 1895-1901, our suspicions were directed against France and Russia, and our sympathies were more on the side of the Triple Alliance. It was not till the XXth Century was well begun that we began to look on William II as the probable source of all dangers. I well remember the time when France was not regarded with a sympathetic eye, and it must be confessed that there were episodes in the history of the Third Republic which were calculated to rouse English prejudices. Such, for example, was the rise into impor-

tance of that monstrous charlatan General Boulanger, who seemed likely for a time to dominate his country. Looked at from across the Channel he seemed a dangerous impostor, and it was difficult to see how such a person could be allowed by any sane people to assume a position of importance. That bubble collapsed in 1889. The Panama scandals of 1891-1892 were not attractive to foreign observers. But the Dreyfus case attracted even more attention in England than the *bra général*, or Panama, and its history caused the large majority of Englishmen to conclude that French officialism was capable of judicial murders, and flagrant disregard of every rule of evidence and equity. This exhibition of injustice and ineptitude covered all the year 1898, and we watched with impatience the failure of the French intellectuals to argue their own Government into sanity. The unfortunate Jewish captain went to the penal swamps of Cayenne for many a year. When France leagued herself—first only with light bonds of courtesy, then by more formal diplomatic links—with Russia, our old enemy, the Russia of the Treaty of San Stefano and the Penjdeh incident, we felt distinctly uneasy. We thanked our stars, indeed, that the Triple Alliance existed, to hold such an *entente* in check. But when William II began to display his idiosyncrasies, and sent the famous Krüger telegram, then indeed did our feeling of splendid isolation seem, perhaps, not quite so splendid as we had once thought it. And there was a distinct depression of spirits, which was at its lowest at the very end of the XIXth Century, when the South African War was not going well, and the newspapers of almost the whole of Europe were censuring our land-hunger and gibing at our defeats.

All this is but general comment on a long-forgotten period, and I should not have thought of touching on

the subject of the development of the Franco-Russian *entente*, but for the fact that a ludicrous incident brought me for once into the shady side of French officialism, and gave me a glimpse of the way things were managed by the *ronds de cuir* of the Parisian public offices. The whole story was so absurd, though so insignificant, that I cannot refrain from telling it. I still have a memento of it in a torn red ticket, which lurks at the bottom of a desk, in company with other scraps that have odd histories—letters from long-dead foreign acquaintances about long-forgotten happenings.

The date which I have to recall is September 21, 1901, on which there took place the great review at Reims in honour of Czar Nicholas II, then paying the most spectacular of his official visits to France. It was not the first of them, for he had been to Paris in 1896, and President Faure had returned the call, by taking warships to Cronstadt in 1897. But this was to be attended by a huge military display, calculated to impress the Czar with the size and splendid organization of the French Army. More than four army corps, over 100,000 men, the picked divisions from the eastern frontier, always kept ready against a German raid, were to march past before the Russian sovereign on the vast plain north of Reims, where so much blood was destined to be spilt fifteen years after, during the Great War. The whole business was designed so much as a military demonstration that the Czar did not even pass through Paris or display himself there, but went straight from Dunkirk to Reims, avoiding the capital, and making the old royal and imperial palace of Compiègne his main halting-place.

Now I had always been greatly interested in the French Army, ever since I saw one of the old units of the host of Napoleon III march out to the station, in 1870,

on what was intended to be the triumphal progress to Berlin. Here was a unique opportunity of seeing the French Army *en masse* and at its best, since the chosen troops were to be exhibited. As it chanced, I had a companion as eager as myself to witness the show, and determined to see it if he could. This was my brother-in-law, Robert Maclagan, an engineer-colonel just back from two years' service in the South African War, very keen, after long experience in the veldt, to see what the organization and equipment of the French Army was like. A practical soldier fresh from the field is always anxious to get a glimpse of foreign armies. So we resolved to penetrate to the Reims review if we could possibly manage it, though aware that the French Government was not encouraging foreign visitors, and had even put on special hindrances against non-official spectators. This was on the pretext that, if great crowds were allowed to assemble, there might possibly be an attempt to assassinate the Czar by some of the Russian anarchists, who were very numerous at that time in Paris. I do not say that this was altogether unreasonable, since Russian exiles have always been prone to this sort of diversion, down to Gorgulof, who only the other day killed the harmless and unpretending President of the French Republic.

My brother-in-law and I started from London on the 18th, and after a rather rough passage reached Paris on the same evening, in a train crowded with French and Americans. Next morning we went to the British Embassy, in quest of tickets for one of the grand-stands which we knew had been erected on the review ground. It would have been useless to attend the review along with the general public, without any point of vantage. For not only should we have been lost in the crowd, but it had been announced that precautions would be

taken to keep back unofficial spectators as far as possible from the central tribune, where the Czar and Czarina were to have their places with President Loubet, in front of the national standard. In the absolute flat of the Reims country there would be no points of view from which it would be possible to see even a corner of the show.

We met with a sharp disappointment at the British Embassy, to which we had hoped that a fair allowance of tickets would be allotted by the Government. The polite but rather bored young attaché, with whom we had to deal, explained that the number of tickets sent to the Embassy had been infinitesimal—perhaps because Great Britain and France were not on the very best of terms in 1901. They had all been absorbed by the diplomatic people, and a few official military visitors from London. Even my brother-in-law's plea that he was a colonel only just back from the South African War, and anxious to make technical observations, had not the slightest effect.

We were leaving the Embassy, somewhat dashed in spirits, when we were accosted at the Lodge by the jolly old porter, a perfect type of the capable British ex-non-commissioned officer. As we were passing, he said with a cheerful smile, 'Well, gentlemen, you have been trying the front door, now you had better try the back door'. Somewhat puzzled, we asked him what he meant. He answered that in Paris, if you had a little money in your pocket, there were always ways and means of doing things that were officially impossible. He was sure that we could get tickets for the review, if we only went to the right person. 'But who is the right person here?' we asked. 'Well,' replied the porter, 'I don't know myself who he is, but there is a man who does, and that is the head-porter of the

“Hôtel Trois Étoiles”’—I disguise the name, of course—‘who is the most knowing man in Paris, and has managed all sorts of queer jobs for English and Americans too. If you go to him, I am sure that he can put you in the way of getting what you want.’ We thanked the nice old man, gave him a competent *douceur*, and went off in search of the head-porter of the ‘Hôtel Trois Étoiles’.

This was a most magnificent and resplendent person, with an air in which dignity was tempered by a sly look of readiness to do surreptitious commissions. We told him that the porter at the British Embassy had informed us that he knew his Paris better than any other living person, and could probably put us in the way of getting privileged tickets for the great Reims review, which were not to be obtained in the official localities. Obviously pleased at the testimony to his omniscience, the head-porter replied that he was perfectly well aware of how such tickets could be got, and would give us the address of a very useful, and indeed important, person who was in the habit of getting tickets for all great public shows from the members of the Civil Service who were unable or unwilling to be present. Thrifty French officials, who had eligible places allotted to them, were accustomed to go to a certain ‘M. Chose’, who would buy their tickets from them, if the show was an attractive one, and resell them to outsiders, if the outsiders were presentable and promised to keep the transaction dark. For, of course, a civil servant would get into terrible trouble if his ticket was presented by an impossible person—some one known to the police, for example, or an individual of noisy and eccentric behaviour. The minor official people, doorkeepers and ticket-takers, were quite aware of the practice, and never gave any trouble, if

the ticket, belonging to a fairly well-known *rond de cuir*, was presented by someone who obviously was not the individual to whom the place had been given. This was a part of a pleasant 'live and let live' principle common to the whole of the minor grades of the Civil Service. There would be no difficulty if we arrived at a bargain with 'M. Chose', who was sure to have a few tickets in hand, from elderly or stay-at-home officials who were accustomed to have dealings with him.

This was most hopeful and enlightening information. So we gave the head-porter a gold napoleon in exchange for the address of the invaluable M. Chose. It was quite close, in one of the good streets full of offices and agencies of all sorts, at the back of the Grand Opera and close to the Boulevards. We found the house, and discovered that on the second floor was the office of 'M. Chose, agent d'affaires'. Going upstairs, we were shown into a small but smart and well-lighted office, which gave an impression of prosperity—as did M. Chose himself, an affable, middle-aged man in a frock-coat. We explained our requirements to him, and mentioned that his name had been given us by the porter of the 'Hôtel Trois Étoiles'. He said that he would certainly be able to oblige us, but that it was necessary first of all to ascertain what was the scale of our requirements, for the tariff was very different for different kinds of entertainment. To begin with, he said, he had a few tickets sent him by deputies in the Chamber, which entitled the bearer to travel in the special train which was to carry the President, to sit in the central tribune, and also to partake of the grand luncheon at Frénois after the review, at which the Czar would be entertained, with a company of four hundred or five hundred covers only. This would be rather expensive—200 francs, the equivalent in those

days of £8. But the advantages would be enormous, as the trains for the general public started at most inconvenient hours about midnight, and there would be great difficulties in getting any food after the review, since no public buffets were to be allowed, and Reims was five miles from the review ground; also the trains back to Paris would be crowded to an uncomfortable extent.

But after a moment M. Chose assumed a reflective aspect, and observed that this would not, perhaps, be quite safe. The company at the luncheon being so limited, strangers might provoke notice, and we did not either of us look like French deputies, the part we should have to assume if we went to the feast. We might get into conversation with our neighbours and be detected at once—however good our French—as foreigners, which might provoke suspicion, since every precaution was being taken by the police to exclude all but official personages from the lunch. It was possible that we might be questioned by the detectives who would be about, and, if our identity were discovered, both we and the deputies whose cards we should be using might get into unpleasant trouble. He must not risk the causing of an *esclandre* to two of his regular and most respected clients in the Chamber.

On the whole, therefore, he recommended the second and much less eligible choice. He had a limited number of tickets belonging to senior members of the Civil Service, heads of departments in several of the ministries. These respectable officials were entitled to seats in the two tribunes flanking the great central one in which the Czar and the President would be sitting. The view of the ceremony would be excellent, but these tickets did not entitle the holders either to travel in the presidential special train, or (of course) to partake



of the imperial luncheon. The number of ticket-holders rendered that impossible. We should have to find our way as best we could to the seats, and cater for ourselves. But there would be no probability of unpleasantness, as so many of the officials with tickets would have ceded them to other persons that the presence of strangers, even foreigners, in these tribunes would not make our neighbours suspicious. The doorkeepers at these tribunes would be aware of the fact that some of the persons they were admitting would be substitutes, not original holders, but they would not wish to give trouble to the ceders of tickets by reporting them to the police. The price for these places in the secondary tribunes would be only 50 francs. He could give to my brother-in-law, who had a bronzed military aspect, a ticket belonging to a *sous-chef* of a department in the War Office, and to myself one issued to a man in the Ministry of the Interior.

This seemed to us a choice much better than that of personating deputies, which (as M. Chose so wisely observed) might possibly get us into trouble. So we opted for two 50-franc tickets of the respectable senior officials, in the same row of the left-hand flanking tribune. My ticket, which I have before me, is No. 1485 Estrade D. It is bright scarlet, and has on the reverse a plan of the tribunes, and of the route by which persons having seats in them were to arrive at each. We gave our best thanks to M. Chose for his resourcefulness and courtesy, paid over our 100 francs, and went forth, very much amused at the idea of personating respectable officials in the French Civil Service. The interesting part of the whole business was to have discovered the machinery by which the frugal bureaucrat could make slight additions to his income, and to realize that the system must be working with the

full knowledge of the whole official community. For clearly the man now at the top must know what his contemporaries were doing a few years back, and must realize that their successors must be still playing the same old game. The obtaining of tickets for interesting functions must be a moderately lucrative pursuit, and one could understand why everyone entitled to such a privilege would exercise it, even if he had not the slightest intention of going to the show himself. I asked myself whether M. Chose was a monopolist, dealing with the whole Civil Service, and came to the conclusion that he probably was not: the number of bureaucrats in France is inordinate, and there must be room for the existence of many of these useful *agents d'affaires*.

It now remained to secure our means of getting to Reims, since we were not to enjoy the luxury of travelling by the presidential train. This involved a journey to the remote Gare de l'Est, to procure ourselves tickets: for the *succursales* of the Eastern Railway in Central Paris refused to issue tickets for the review, and assured us that no special trains whatever were to be run for the benefit of those travelling to Reims on the night of the 20th or the early morning of the 21st. Apparently this was done deliberately, on orders from the Government, which were still carrying out the idea of preventing large crowds from assembling, in order that there might be no danger of attempts on the life of the Czar. Such persistent folks as chose to make their way to Reims, without a ticket for one of the tribunes, were deliberately parked as far away as possible from the saluting point and the centre of interest.

Considering the importance of the show, it seems astonishing to remember that one's only way of getting to it was to take a train which started from the Gare

de l'Est at 12.30 midnight and reached Reims at 5.30—five hours to cover ninety-seven miles. There was no train on the actual morning of the review, save the President's special, that arrived at Reims before 9.30; and the review, some miles away, was to commence at ten. This was the most malignant part of the scheme, devised to keep away the general public by making attendance on the field difficult.

The persistent sightseers, like ourselves, had mustered in great force for the 12.30, and our carriage was full up to the official limit—an officer in uniform, two ladies who packed enormous and beautiful hats in the rack, and three bureaucrats of respectable age. The train lumbered along, stopping at every wayside station, and sleep was difficult and disturbed. I had a series of small nightmares—the most terrifying of which was that I had woken in the morning to find myself at Basle, instead of Reims, listening to porters running about and talking German.

It was quite a relief to find that, when one's train did come to a stop, it was under the shadow of Joan of Arc's cathedral, and not in Switzerland! Walking out of the station just after dawn, we found the whole city still asleep—there was not a cab about, and even the cafés were not open, so that we could not get a warm drink to open the fatiguing day that was before us. Fortunately, we had put some chocolate and biscuits in our pockets, so that we did not go absolutely without nourishment. Now came another sample of the obliging way in which the Government had determined to deal with the general public. We found to our horror that the short branch line to Bethény station, in the centre of the review ground, which we had counted on taking, was shut up for the day and not running. We had therefore to undertake a five-mile walk out from

Reims, all over ploughed fields and stubble—for this was the itinerary prescribed for the public, the high road being reserved for the military, who were pouring by, regiment after regiment. Fortunately, the morning was propitious, a light south-west wind, bright sunshine, and not the least sign of autumn cold, though later in the day we had some showers.

We found our tribune D all that had been promised us by M. Chose, abutting immediately on tribunes A and B, where the Presidential and Russian parties were to be harboured. The seats were comfortable, and, even when all our neighbours had arrived, they were not inconveniently crowded. But we had three full hours to wait while the tribunes were filling up, which would have been tedious if we had not been taking stock of our companions, and looking out into the distance at the perpetually moving masses of troops which were accumulating in the far perspective of the vast plain. We found ourselves among friendly, lively neighbours full of conversation: the ladies in their best frocks, the men mostly in full morning dress with tall hats. I did not discover a single other Englishman or American in the whole tribune; most of the spectators I take to have been the genuine bureaucrats and their wives—how many of them were ‘substitutes’, like ourselves, I cannot say. The doorkeeper who admitted us to the gangway certainly made no attempt to differentiate personalities—he simply tore off a small corner of our red tickets without looking at them and hustled us on.

We had been watching the distant troops—a couple of miles away—shifting about for hours, when they at last seemed to come to a definite stand, and a salute of 101 guns thundered out from batteries somewhere near Bethény station, far to our left. This marked the arrival of the President and the imperial guests. The

Czar, on a brown horse, rode along the whole front of the nearest line of infantry, taking the salute, with a French and Russian Staff of enormous numbers behind him. The President was in a four-horsed carriage—State motors did not then exist; with him some of his ministers. The Czarina was in another gala carriage, with only one Russian lady with her. Madame Loubet, whom we had expected to be her *vis-à-vis*, was in a third conveyance. The carriages were escorted by a picturesque troop of Algerian cavalry—Spahis—with fluttering white cloaks streaming out behind them in the fresh south-west wind.

After riding (or driving) along the whole front of the leading army corps, the Czar and the President turned up toward their allotted places in the central tribune, which was gaily decorated with all manner of French and Russian flags, and with an enormous 'R.F.' made up of rifles and lances skilfully joined together. I obtained a fine view of the whole party, since, when they had taken their seats, they were not more than ten yards from us. The first thing that occurred to me was that all the meticulous precautions taken for the protection of the Czar were fundamentally useless. For if my brother-in-law and I had been not ourselves, but Russian anarchists disguised as an English colonel and professor, nothing whatever could have prevented us from whipping out revolvers and shooting the autocrat at short range. The whole responsibility for the safety of Nicholas lay, not with the Army, or the obvious plain-clothes police, whom we could easily make out, but with the flair of the affable M. Chose for detecting suspicious persons and refusing to sell them tickets. Surely it would have been in the power of Russian exiles, who are ingenious folks, to disguise themselves as respectable English tourists, and

to impose on the surreptitious vendor of seats in tribune D. So my thoughts ran; but M. Chose was obviously a very clever and observant personage, and perhaps I was doing him injustice, when I reflected that he might have sold two red tickets to two of the sort of deliberate and self-sacrificing assassins with whom we are only too familiar in Russian history.

I had a very good opportunity of studying the French President and the Russian imperial pair, since all three sat within ten yards of me for the space of some three hours, while the interminable defilade of the four army corps before the central tribune was in progress. M. Loubet was an eminently respectable *bourgeois* figure, like thousands of elderly Frenchmen whom one meets in the street or the train, only conspicuous to-day by the immense broad cordon of the Legion of Honour worn across his breast. He was not particularly inspiring to gaze upon. Nor, for the matter of that, was the unfortunate Nicholas II: the first thing that one noted about him was his extraordinary resemblance to his cousin, our present King George—then Duke of York. But he suffered by the comparison—the English prince was by far the more alert and engaging figure. The Czar did not look particularly intelligent, and he did look extremely tired—which was not to be wondered at, considering the hard ceremonial work that he had been going through for the last three days. The general impression that one got from his face was that he was liable to be driven by stronger personalities, though he might be obstinate and would dislike the driving process. He sat through the long review with a certain lassitude, and did not seem to be getting on very spontaneously with his obligatory conversations with the President and the other French magnates about him. The Czarina was

exceedingly beautiful, and with a pleasant expression that does not always go with good features. But she had a slightly harassed look that did not apparently proceed from mere fatigue, but appeared like the results of the stress of royalty. She was dressed entirely in black—I suppose that she must have been in mourning for some relative—but the effect was sombre, contrasting with the bright uniforms and the summer frocks of the officers and ladies who sat around her. I wish that I had taken down at the moment the impression that this tragic pair gave me; but though I noted their outward appearance, I did not indulge in psychological analysis. If I had, it would probably have been all wrong. I do not think that I should have guessed that the husband was the man who would ruin an empire by weakness, or that the wife would help in the ruin by confidences unwisely reposed, and influences perversely exerted. That Nicholas was not of the calibre to play the part of a world-dominating autocrat looked obvious enough; but one knew that Russia was really run by a bureaucracy, which was set on self-preservation and the continuance of old political machinery, as well as on a spirited Eastern policy.

The fact that lay hidden from one's expectation was the course of the Russo-Japanese War which was to come four years after—a war which revealed the weakness of the colossus, whose size and ambitions had been so long the nightmare of English statesmen. Primarily, one reflects, it was the wholly unexpected failures of the Russian army at Port Arthur and Mukden, and the humiliating end of the Russian navy at Tschushima, that made us turn our eyes away from the old bugbear, and fix them instead on a new source of disquiet—the vagaries of Kaiser William and the menace of his ever-growing navy.

When the President and the Czar had settled down into their central tribune, behind the great national flag, there commenced the march-past of the four army corps, which formed the main bulk of the troops that were to display the magnificence of the French military power to the Russian visitor. They took nearly three hours to go by, though they went past, not in successive lines, but in enormous brigade blocks marching parallel with each other—each brigade a brilliant square of gleaming bayonets, for the sun was still bright upon the field. Each corps was followed by its auxiliary arms—ten years later one would have said that the allowance of artillery was insufficient—but we were in 1901, not in 1914. There was a heavy battery or two visible, but not very many of them. On the whole the march-past was well carried out, though one could note that some brigades were not keeping their distances with perfect accuracy, and that occasionally a regiment was a little ragged—the flanks outstripping the centre. But in the mass petty errors were lost, and the general effect was awe-inspiring—acres and acres of serried bayonets filling the whole of a vast plain. There was a burst of cheering, with intention, as the VI Corps went by—this was the special guard of the Lorraine frontier, the 'Iron Corps' as it was called, which opposed to the German menace a force much exceeding that of the normal units. Everyone knew that this was to be the spear-head, if the thrust had ever to be made—as everyone expected that it would be ere very long.

After the army corps and their train had gone by, there was a final display of a spectacular, even a theatrical sort. At the farther end of the vast empty space, where the infantry had been, there was now visible a mass of cavalry of every description—four divisions I believe, some twelve thousand sabres. The



first thing that struck me, after the infantry had cleared off, was the extraordinary blaze of reflected sunlight from the cuirassier brigades: their masses of armour twinkled, as I remember remarking at the time, like the windows of a distant town, when seen from a height on a very hot day. We were perhaps two miles from them before they began to move, but we could have seen them if they had been ten miles away, so brilliant was the glare. The cavalry went by the saluting point twice, once by regiments at a trot, and then, when they had reformed at the other end of the review ground, in a great frontal advance in line, charging straight at a gallop towards the central tribunes, with brigades side by side. Their commanding general and his staff led, fifty yards in front of the middle regiment of the middle division. When at quite a moderate distance from the standard and the Czar, he threw up his sword and shouted the halt. The regiments all drew up, from gallop to absolute standfast, with very creditable regularity. The charge was awe-inspiring by its enormous impetus and sudden, well-disciplined cessation. Owing to the wet weather on the preceding day there was not the least dust, and the whole movement was visible from first to last, without any of the blurring of visibility which comes from a big cavalry movement in dry weather, when the ground is parched. Of course, the timing was not *absolutely* perfect—no one could have expected it from such a big force operating on such a long front. Some of the regiments were a little ahead of others when the stop came, and the line was not perfectly straight. But the effect was tremendous, when such a mass of galloping horses and drawn swords was hurled directly at us—one felt that, if they had not halted, the tribunes would have been swept away by the rush of such a storm.

This grand display was the end of the show, and almost before the cavalry had cleared off, and while the carriages were being brought forward to take up the President and the ladies, it began to rain, a steady drizzle, which continued all the afternoon. The sun had reserved his last blaze for the great charge, and retired behind clouds. The official party went off to the state lunch in the great marquee at Frénois, where the Czar and the President exchanged the sort of toasts of flowery international flattery which are proper on such occasions. I heard afterwards that the seating and waiting at this lunch were not too well managed—that some got too much champagne and some too little, and that all the minor magnates complained that they had been given bad seats. However, this was no concern of ours, as my brother-in-law and I had come to the same conclusion as M. Chose—that we were well out of it.

All the same, the return to Reims was not pleasant: we had to walk back the five miles from Bethény to the old city, over the same ploughed fields that we had traversed in the morning, now turned into sticky clay, in a vast umbrellaed crowd. We were just wet enough at the end to make the three and a half hours in the train returning to Paris rather cramping, with promise of future rheumatism.

It was fortunate that we caught our train at all; it was overcrowded, and a mob of excited Parisians were hunting the stationmaster, demonstrating that he must put on more carriages, as was reasonable. He refused to do so, saying that the Government had ordered that no special arrangements whatever were to be made that day, and we steamed out of Reims station leaving a gesticulating mob besetting the obtuse official. I suppose that they cannot have got back to their homes before midnight! We had succeeded in

buying in Reims some tinned meat and rolls and a bottle of beer—our first food since 5.30 a.m., when we had stayed ourselves on chocolate and biscuits.

A most fatiguing day, but well worth the trouble and expense—like Mr. Belloc's tiger. When my brother-in-law and I got back to our hotel, and sat down after dinner to discuss our experiences, and comment on what we had seen, the Colonel had one outstanding point to make. He was just back, as I have said, from two years of the South African War, and what struck him most was the awful visibility of the French Army. In the Transvaal every British officer had learnt that against modern rifles long advances over open ground were a murderous business, even in open order. Comparative invisibility was the desideratum, and close formations were found to be absolutely criminal. 'If those fellows', said my brother-in-law, 'have not got a complete war-kit of some neutral colour, like our khaki, they will most of them get killed in the first engagements. Red breeches and bright metal equipment—why, every man will be visible a mile away! And if, as I hear, they believe in mass-offensive in close order, in the Napoleonic style, they will have an awful lesson. I *can't* suppose that they intend to put those cuirassiers into action with their tin bellies and burnished helmets: a body of them is visible not one but five miles away, if the sun is out. And the day of shock-cavalry is long over.'

The French called themselves a military nation, and believed that they had nothing to learn in the way of war-preparation. But, as a matter of fact, they *did* send their infantry into the field in bright-red breeches in 1914, disastrously plain to the naked eye. And what is worse, their heavy cavalry *did* start the war in cuirasses, and armed with a pop-gun carbine of short

range. And they did try the offensive *à outrance* in close formation, with dreadful results, in the battles on the frontiers and in Lorraine in August 1914. The Germans sent every man to the front in field-grey; we had for years used the khaki that was a by-product of the Indian Mutiny. But it took the French some terrible months to discover that red-breeched infantry were indecently conspicuous, and that armoured cuirassiers, skirmishing on foot in their big boots with short-range carbines, were perfectly useless.

I do not know whether the great Reims review had any appreciable effect either on Russian or on French mentality or politics, other than to reassure each for the moment as to the sympathy of the other. There were still, in the thirteen years to come, many waverings of confidence—one remembers the devastating effect on military opinion of the disasters of the Russians in their Japanese war, and one recalls how France in a moment of depression once dismissed a foreign minister at the behest of the Emperor William, rather than provoke Germany to extremes. The French must have had many a qualm as to the actual value of the Russian alliance, under such a monarch as Nicholas II, before the *entente* that had been sketched out in the early nineties of the XIXth Century was exposed to the test of war in the second decade of the XXth. How fortunate for them that, when the long-expected clash came, the Kaiser had by his vagaries produced the result that not only Russia but the British Empire was drawn at once into the deadly game on the side of France!

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## CHAPTER VII

### AN ABORTIVE SPANISH INSURRECTION

APRIL 3, 1903

FOR fifty-five years, from 1876 to 1931, Spain enjoyed a comparative immunity from civil strife, *pronunciamientos* by the Army, and Communist riots—a peace that it had never known since the sleepy absolutist days of the decadent XVIIIth Century. It is a sorrowful sight to see to-day a recrudescence of all its old familiar evils, and to look upon a country as disturbed as it was under the first republic of 1868–70, or the second republic of 1873–74. Once more we have generals stirring up military revolts, and Socialist mobs destroying historical monuments, under the pretence that they are protesting against clerical superstition. This detestable habit, which the Spanish Socialists share with French Jacobins of the Revolutionary period and the Bolsheviks of to-day, was a thing which one hoped had become obsolescent in Western Europe. We were wrong—there still lurks in Spain the same iconoclastic fury which wrecked the splendid tombs of the Kings of Aragon at Poblet, and battered the glorious imagery of the reredos which looked down upon them, in 1835. I know of no more unhappy sight in modern European history than Spain in the period between 1814 and 1868, when the traditionalist and clerical party fought with the Radicals in endless revolutions and reactions, accompanied with wholly unnecessary political execu-

tions and reprisals. It is impossible to feel sympathy with either faction: if Ferdinand VII in the early years was a freakish and perjured tyrant, the 'Exaltados' who occasionally got possession of power showed themselves quite unable to use it decently. In later decades, during the long reign of the loose-living and ignorant Queen Isabella, political strife was really conducted by ambitious generals, who might call themselves Liberals or Moderates or Progressists or Republicans, but were really cloaking personal rivalries under insincere party names. Espartero and Narvaez, O'Donnell, and Serrano do not really represent varieties of constitutional theory, but diverse ways of utilizing military influence. If anything could excuse the use of the strong hand by the soldiers it was the obvious incompetence of the politicians who were not in uniform—these eloquent lawyers, journalists, professors, or Freemasons contributed nothing but highbrow theories to the governance of the realm, when they happened to get a chance of asserting themselves. The second republic of 1873-74 seems to me to have shown exactly the same phenomena as the third republic of 1931-32 is displaying to-day. Civil troubles between 'Federalists' and 'Cantonists', revolts of 'intransigents' and partisans of the Socialist International, murders of employers and landlords, and burnings of buildings belonging to unpopular persons, were the normal phenomena. The Republican Government of 1873 behaved exactly like the Republican Government of to-day, suspending all newspapers which ventured on criticism, dissolving all clubs and societies which were accused of conspiracy by word or deed against the public safety, and arresting suspected persons at large, who were then kept indefinitely in prison untried. It proved incapable of dealing with anarchist conspiracies—the great naval arsenal of

Cartagena was for weeks in the hands of desperados, who released and armed the galley slaves. After eighteen months of this, complicated by a vigorous Carlist rising of the clericals and 'traditionalists' of Biscay and Navarre, the chaos ended by the intervention of the Army—the great *pronunciamiento* of December 1874, when General Martinez Campos proclaimed Alfonso XII King of Spain, as the true heir of the constitutional dynasty, and carried the whole of the troops and the propertied classes with him. The Republicans collapsed, the Carlists were put down by force, and after a year of military dictatorship the young king was able to summon a Cortes and restore constitutional government in January 1876.

There followed fifty-five years in which Spain slowly settled down to order, and began to show signs of recovery and economic progress. Credit is due to the short-lived Alfonso XII (1874–85), to his widow, the Regent Maria Cristina of Hapsburg, who ruled for her son from 1886 to 1902, and to Alfonso XIII himself during his twenty-nine years of formal government after he had come of age. I cannot but deplore the end of the monarchy—which the King magnanimously prevented from developing into a normal Spanish civil war by his voluntary retirement from the realm. It was not an abdication, for he merely declared that he withdrew, retaining all his rights, till Spain should have come to a saner mind.

The fifty years of peace were achieved by no mean statesmanship, since all the old elements of trouble were still surviving underground, and two unlucky wars in Cuba and Morocco brought defeat and discredit to the monarchy. The Republican party raised its head again when a new generation had forgotten its earlier fiascos; the army sometimes grumbled at not occupying the

dominant position that it had held in the evil days of Queen Isabella and her military politicians. Catalonia contributed both regionalist discontent—of Catalonian Home-Rulers against Madrid—and anarchist internationalist discontent in Barcelona, where Bolsheviks existed long before they became the rulers of Russia. This is the most bomb-loving city in Western Europe, a centre of trouble for the last thirty years, whatever Government might be in power. And there were anarchist elements outside Barcelona—as there had been in the XIXth Century—such as the ‘Mano Negra’ (Black Hand) secret society in Andalusia, which from 1883 onward occasionally emerged with an isolated atrocity. Its programme was the nationalization of all land and the equal distribution of wealth.

The only element of disorder that seemed extinct was the Carlist party in Biscay and the North, which was hopelessly handicapped by the uninspiring personalities of the heirs of the old ultramontane pretender, and saw no great reason for overthrowing a régime which—though it called itself constitutional—was essentially Monarchical and Catholic. By a really notable exhibition of statesmanship the ruling dynasty contrived to allow Conservative and Liberal cabinets to rule alternately, without any disastrous results to itself. Many of the wiser Republicans, with the celebrated orator Castelar, ultimately accepted the monarchy, and melted into the Liberal party. It is true that Constitutionalism was a little hollow—what really kept the kingdom stable was that the army was, on the whole, loyal, and still more that very strong and well-organized body the military police, the *guardia civil*, rightly called the *bene merito*, as having deserved well of the country. They had completely put down the old evil of brigandage long before my first visit to Spain. The silhouette of the *guardia*



*civil* watcher, with his three-cornered hat, carbine and black cloak, was familiar to one at passes in the hills, no less than in dark street-corners in the night.

It must be conceded that in a country where universal suffrage was supposed to be in operation, parliamentary elections were sometimes a little farcical. It was an observed fact that if a Conservative government was in office, there would be a Conservative majority in the Cortes, and if a Liberal government, then a Liberal majority. The prefect or *jefe politico*, and the *caciques* or local 'bosses', were supposed to know more about this than they should. I have heard stories of a prefect walking down to the counting-place with a few thousand extra votes in his bag, to be used if necessary. Also of *caciques* who (as in some American southern states) would warn political opponents that it would not be very safe for them to vote on the following day. But this was done in decent secrecy. It was said that a cabinet would often settle how many seats the various oppositions—there were always several of them, not only the regular opposition of the day, but Republicans and Carlists—were to be given in the next general election.

However this might be, there were fifty years of surface tranquillity. *Pronunciamientos* of the military seemed to have ceased: insurrections were rare—but, as I am going to tell, I saw a very fine specimen of one in Madrid in 1903, with all the noise and inconsequence that might have been expected. It was put down very cleverly and with a minimum of bloodshed, though the Republican insurgents were in possession of the centre of the city for a whole day, and some hours to spare. It was only in Barcelona that bombs and riots were endemic—and expected as occasional natural phenomena, like thunderstorms or floods.

There remained the fundamental difficulty that there was, as there always had been, a Republican party, whose more intransigent elements had never forgotten the possibility of revolutions in a country like Spain. The incompatible mentalities of traditionalist and revolutionist had not been ended even by long years of comparative peace. This was brought home to me in a most amusing fashion in 1908, when I happened to be in Catalonia, inspecting the ruined fortifications of Gerona, a city which had made a splendid defence against the armies of Napoleon in 1809. I chanced upon a young Catalan student, a native of the place, who led me round its points of interest. He was, as I soon discovered, a Republican and an anti-clerical of the rampant sort, though a very pleasant fellow. As we wandered round the high-perched cathedral, at the top of the town, he pointed out to me a young infantry lieutenant in uniform, who was kneeling before a much-petticoated image of the Virgin, and telling his beads in simple piety. 'That boy is my cousin,' said the student, 'but he is living in the XVth Century, and I am living in the XXth. How can we understand each other?' This gave the case in a nutshell. Many Spaniards—though not so many as there used once to be—are not merely 'traditionalists' but intolerant to a degree, not only of freethinkers and Freemasons but of Protestants and other sectaries. It was only a generation ago, in the time of Alphonso XII, that the open profession of Protestantism ceased to be a legal offence. On the other hand, many more Spaniards are not only anti-clericals but wild iconoclasts, who want to wreck churches and burn monasteries. No Government can please both these sets of people. At the present moment we seem to have in 1933 the curious anomaly of a very anti-clerical Government, whose main difficulty is to prevent obvious

outrages and breaches of the peace by the extremists of its own party. Nothing is more difficult than to guard law and order against one's own too energetic adherents.

I was travelling round Spain five times between 1903 and 1923, with a gap, of course, for the war-years 1914-18, and had to go far afield into regions seldom visited, to observe the ground of battle-fields such as Albueria and Fuentes de Oñoro, which lie off tourist-tracks. There was a very perceptible difference in the face of the country between the first and the last of these dates, and all on the side of improvement. More especially the roads had been marvellously bettered. In 1903 they were abominable the moment that one got off the ancient highways between the great towns, such as Burgos-Madrid-Toledo, or Badajoz-Seville-Cadiz. I think the introduction of motor-traffic had much to do with this—especially under a king who was himself somewhat of a motor-fanatic. Cross-country travel had become very much more easy and pleasant. So, too, with the outward aspect and lighting and policing of the larger cities, and with the character of inns and hotels in secondary places. Even the proverbially slow railways were a little faster: they used in 1903 generally to function at oddly chosen hours; and a change at a junction generally implied tedious waiting for a train going in the right direction. I remember Medina del Campo as a place where one was generally stranded from twelve midnight to three or four in the morning, sitting patiently in a dimly lighted refreshment-room, in the company of many smokers wrapped up in their cloaks.

But economic improvement does not necessarily bring about enthusiasm for the Government under which it takes place. And a party long excluded from power, like the Spanish Republicans, and containing many ambitious publicists, cannot be comforted by town-planning,

electric light, or improved sanitation. I imagine that the revolution of 1931 was very largely due to the fact that a whole generation has grown up which does not remember the fearful fiasco of the last republic in 1873-74, which flickered out among anarchist risings and Carlist insurrections. The people who could recall these old ills have passed away, and discontent with present conditions made their successors try once again the old experiment. Not that I wish to say a word in favour of dictatorships, monarchical or military, as ideal institutions. But those who chafed under them were not aware that anarchy is worse than a dictatorship—as they will presently realize.

Incidentally I seem to detect a very similar phenomenon in India. The awful memory of the Great Mutiny of 1857-58 impressed all who had seen it, British or Indian, and even all those who had been brought up under its shadow for more than fifty years. It was only when the old generation had passed away that serious discontent began again to be visible. And I may add that, in England, the ideas of modernist dealings with India only became possible when there were no longer, among our governing classes and publicists, a large proportion of people who remembered the Well of Cawnpore, or had near relatives who had been massacred in some less-known centre of atrocities. Old dangers are forgotten, and the teaching of old experiences dies out, when fifty years are past, save among those who have studied history.

But it is worth while to give some record of my own amusing experiences in a Spanish insurrection now nearly thirty years old, which looked formidable enough in its inception, but flickered out in two days in a most absurd fashion. Madrid, as everyone knows, is a political city of comparatively modern foundation—it only goes

back to Philip II, who made it his capital on purely geographical principles, as being the most central spot in Spain. It lies on the barren high tableland of New Castile, far from any navigable river (the obscure Manzanares generally dries up in summer) or any large stretch of fertile land. It is wind-swept in winter, and sun-struck in summer. Its only *raison d'être* is that it was for two centuries the home of the Hapsburg and Bourbon Courts, and for another century the focus of politics under the various constitutions that have prevailed at one time and another since 1814 and the restoration of Ferdinand VII. Politicians and journalists flock thither, and all *arrivistes*, as the French call them, the young men who want to live by their wits and to get on somehow—whatever the method may be. There are large and excitable lower classes—the hangers-on of a capital which has neither manufactures nor commerce. Like all hangers-on, they are always poor and discontented. When times are hard, everyone is ready to throw a stone at the Government, which gets the credit of being responsible for all human ills. And naturally in the XIXth Century all Governments must be called capitalistic and corrupt—or militaristic and brutal—by the critic who cannot get a job.

I got to Madrid on this occasion, on April 1, 1903, with the special task of working at the Peninsular War archives in the Ministry of War, which I knew to be in a very unsorted condition. They were—*extremely* unsorted, so that important documents had escaped the researches of General Arteché and the Comte de Clonard, who had been burrowing at them long before my time. I hunted up several unpublished bundles of statistics of high interest, and worked at them in a very smoky atmosphere—everyone has his cigar in the search room of the Madrid War Office. It was an amusing con-

trast to the British Museum or the Record Office in Chancery Lane, for I was actually invited to smoke myself, because I was making other people uncomfortable by not doing so.

One afternoon—it was Friday, April 3, 1903—I was doing some shopping for a change, accompanied by my wife, when a boy ran into the shop where we were chaffering about the price of mantillas, and shouted to the proprietor, 'Look out!—there is a revolution on'. The shopkeeper uttered an exclamation, and ran out to let down his heavy iron shutters, recommending us to get home as fast as we could, as there was probably trouble coming. So we ran back to the Fonda de Roma to take shelter—among the clang of many iron shutters that were being noisily lowered, and groups of people getting away out of the main streets in a hurry. The trams and omnibuses had already ceased running. I had noted in the papers that morning reports of seditious gatherings in the lower quarters—but this was not so abnormal as to give warning of serious trouble.

The proximate cause of the rising was, I believe, a double one. One was news from Salamanca of an affray between students and police, in which lives had been lost—this set the Madrid students in a state of frenzy. The other was an accident in which some working-men had been killed, as was alleged, by the carelessness of an unpopular Government contractor. At any rate, the trouble was set going mainly by students, but was joined at once by many political malcontents and an infinite number of the lower classes. Harangued by agitators the mob started the affair by stoning the police in a square in the east end, and having driven them off for a time, collected in a long procession, cheering for the republic and sweeping down the Calle de Alcalá towards the centre of the city. It was the

noise of this demonstration which had penetrated to the street where I was shopping—the rioters were singing in chorus a party chant, which I believe to have been the old Republican slogan, *Riego's Hymn*.

When the mob surged towards the centre of Madrid, the square of the Puerta del Sol, it for some time swept the police before it. The Government had been taken by surprise, and the military were not called out early enough to nip the rising in its bud. The first troops that got up had to be told off to protect the ministries and the Palace, where the young Alfonso XIII, who had been recently declared of age, though he was only sixteen, was not (I believe) in residence. Attempts to break into the ministries failed, but the crowd got possession of the Plaza Mayor, a great square near the Puerta del Sol, and presently concentrated therein and began to barricade it with overturned tramcars and carts on which they had laid hands, and furniture from the surrounding buildings. One party nearly caused international difficulties by falling on the carriage of the Russian Minister, which they mistook for that of the Minister of the Interior. The carriage was smashed, but its occupants were (fortunately) recognized in time to prevent them from suffering serious injury. Some of the insurgents by this time were armed, though only with revolvers and not with rifles, and kept popping at the police, who retaliated with their carbines.

I had naturally returned to my hotel, the Fonda de Roma, which is in a street called Caballero de Gracia, about 300 yards north of the Puerta del Sol, while the trouble was at its height. We were some little distance from the scene of riot, but the shouts and occasional crackling of carbine or revolver shots were very audible, and all through the afternoon there was a constant stream of people passing up the street towards the

trouble—they were not in appearance a very respectable lot—I imagine that they were mainly Republican sympathizers on their way to reinforce the mob. The manager of the hotel assured us that we need not feel any alarm—the matter would flicker out at night, when the troops were sent in to deal with the barricades, and tourists would never come to any harm. We sat down to dinner at eight in the large glass-sided restaurant attached to the hotel—not a very numerous company, but there seemed to be some habitual customers of the establishment, whom not even a revolution could keep from their habitual evening meal—perhaps they were subscription-members, who were determined not to lose a day of their monthly rights. Oddly enough I found at the table next to me an old New College acquaintance, Sir William Worsley, who was in Madrid quite by chance. Several times, when we met in subsequent years, we have talked over the odd finishing touch that was to come to a dinner which was eaten to the accompaniment of what Shakespeare would call a ‘confused noise without’.

We were getting near the end of our meal when the distant firing quickened up, and the shouts developed into a roar, which was obviously approaching us. Moreover we saw, through the glass sides of the restaurant, that the street was getting packed with a dense crowd, all jostling each other and quite jammed together. This looked unpleasant. But suddenly there rose a loud general shriek or shout, ‘Back—the cavalry’. The Government had at last got troops up, and was clearing our street, and I suppose the other streets in the neighbourhood, by cavalry charges. The effect was peculiar as far as we were concerned. The massed crowd was driven on to itself by the rush of the horses, and could not get away rapidly, because of its own con-



gestion. Thrust up against the fragile glass walls of the restaurant, dozens of those in the back row surged against the glass in one lurch, and broke it with a loud crash of smashing panes. They were precipitated backwards among the diners, many of them badly cut about the heads and hands by splinters of the broken glass. The effect was something like an absurd 'knock-about' scene in a pantomime, when so many people rolled in upside-down, with legs in the air—but the amount of blood running soon took away the first comic effect. The involuntary visitors to the restaurant gradually shook themselves together, and got to their feet, and mostly began to mop themselves and take stock of their injuries. There was no second irruption, for the crowd and the cavalry had now swept by the hotel.

I got a good view of the dishevelled intruders—some of them looked like poor working-men, some like typical *apaches*, 'corner boys' or street ruffians, some like excited students; one of them was still grasping a little red flag, two older men looked like politicians or political agitators. They were, naturally, making a tremendous noise and cursing the Government. Here occurred what I can only call marvellous stage-management and presence of mind on the part of the manager of the hotel. He rushed forward and told the waiters to lower the heavy iron shutters over the broken glass; they came down with a crash. Then, turning to the demonstrators, he cried, 'Gentlemen, wipe your faces with the table-napkins, or tie up your cuts with them, and bolt by the back-door, or you will be arrested.' The demonstrators saw the wisdom of his advice, grabbed the table-napkins, and, tying themselves up as best they could, vanished by the rear entrance. Not one was left behind, so I suppose that there had been no very serious injuries.

There was then a tableau in the half-wrecked restaurant—the capable manager, after locking the back-door on the last of the demonstrators, stood looking at the broken glass and upset tables, murmuring to himself, I suppose, ‘*Thousands*’ and *thousands* of pesetas’ damage.’ The guests and waiters were in two groups on each side of him, taking stock of the incident, which had passed over so quickly that they did not realize what had happened till all was over. The ‘confused noise without’ still continued, but obviously much farther off. Then the manager, ‘Clean up what you can of all that’ to the waiters, and ‘Gentlemen and ladies, I think you had better retire’, to the rest of us.

So we went to our dark but spacious rooms on the first floor, and got some sleep, despite the intermittent noises from the distant disturbance. Next morning I had expected that the riots would have been put down by force, but I was quite in error. The Government had adopted a cautious policy; instead of storming the barricades, which would have cost a great loss of life on both sides, they had determined to isolate the revolutionaries in the block of streets where they had concentrated, and to let discouragement and demoralization work, when they should have discovered that the rest of the city was reduced to order, and that no help was coming to them. They particularly wished to avoid anything that could possibly be called by the enemy a massacre. The plan worked perfectly—the troops occupied every point of access to the focus of trouble—but made no attempt to close in upon it, though they broke up all crowds attempting to approach it. The rebels found themselves not attacked, as they had expected to be, but invited to come out and assume the offensive—which did not look promising—there were cannon now commanding most of the principal exits from their

position. Nothing happened save intermittent sniping, resulting in very few casualties, all that day.

Now comes the really amusing part of my story. Though the insurgents were still occupying a strategic position in the heart of Madrid, the Government proclaimed a very high festival, which was sure to attract everyone—even Republicans. It was the middle of Lent, during which the national amusement of bull-fighting is always discontinued in deference to religious sentiment. But after consulting the Archbishop of Toledo, the chief clerical authority, the ministers discovered that it would be possible to have something which was not technically a bull-fight, but presented all its amenities and thrills, without violating the susceptibilities of the Church. A bull-fight is, in the proper sense of the term, the exhibition of bulls of a certain specified mature age, who are attacked by professionals. But if the animals produced for the show were to be just under the certified age, and if they were dealt with by amateurs only, then the affair would not be a bull-fight in the strict meaning of the term. The Archbishop assented to this reading of the proposition laid before him.

So all over Madrid that morning there were immense placards of a new and unique entertainment to be presented in the great royal Plaza de Toros, far out in the eastern suburbs beyond the Retiro Park. Double the usual number of male animals of the bovine tribe, not yet technical bulls by a month or two, were to be assailed by amateur sportsmen, not one of whom, from the *banderillo* to the *espada*, had appeared before on the professional sand. There was a special notice at the bottom of the large white placard, which I read in the porch of my hotel, that the entertainment would *not* be discontinued in the event of fatal accidents.

Now the thrills of a bull-fight are always considerable—but consider the additional excitement when the audience were not assured that the performers were skilled in their respective parts. Though the artistic sense of the habitu   might be jarred by seeing a bull killed improperly, yet on the other hand the efforts of possibly incompetent amateurs might be grotesque and extremely dangerous. For the amateur sportsman, in bull-fighting as in other games, is often an optimistic person, who overrates his own dexterity and is liable to come to grief. Hence possible thrills of the most exciting sort.

Somehow or other these placards were not only displayed all over Madrid, but surreptitiously passed on to the insurgents. How far the results of that night were caused by the consciousness that the revolution had failed, and how far by the attraction which every Spaniard must feel for a new and original form of bull-fight, I cannot say. But during the night hours the garrisons of the barricades melted away; some seem to have escaped in small parties through houses and back premises: it is suspected that others were allowed to go off by narrow side streets without being molested by the troops, who had been warned that neither killing nor capture were desired. Captures would have meant that trials were necessary, and the Government did not want spectacular trials, and eloquent harangues for the defence, but merely to get the whole business over with the minimum of noise.

In the morning of the 5th of April the police and engineers cautiously advanced on the barricades, and found no one either living or dead behind them. The revolutionaries had, it seems, carried away their very few casualties. I was assured that the majority of them put in an attendance at the amateur bull-fight, which

must have been rather a disappointment to them, as I understand that none of the performers were killed or very severely injured—in spite of all the probabilities to the contrary. It took something over a day to clear off the smashed carriages and overturned trams from the Plaza Mayor, but by the 6th the city had resumed its normal aspect, and everyone was circulating on car or on foot as usual. So ended a very odd political incident, which filled me with a considerable respect for the ministers of Alfonso XIII, who had turned what might have been a very bloody business into something very like a farce. If they had really been the tyrants that their opponents called them, there would have been every opportunity of treating the rebels to a very severe lesson. I must confess that I also imbibed a considerable contempt for the futility of the insurgents—if you are going to have a revolution, you should run it better!

I happened to be in Salamanca on April 18th, a fortnight after the Madrid insurrection; meanwhile I had been spending some time in steep Toledo and sleepy Talavera. But now I was bent on walking over the battle-field of the Arapiles, and on seeing exactly how much Wellington could have descried of Marmont's successive movements on the eventful July 22, 1812. I knew, as stated above, that the trouble in the capital of April 3rd had been largely provoked by a riot on the previous day in the old university town, and that bloodshed had taken place there also. Here the students had been the rioters—in Latin countries university students seem to have an irresistible penchant for political disturbances—largely, I presume, from the same youthful exuberance which causes college 'rags' at Oxford or Cambridge, but partly also because they take themselves very seriously, and are convinced of their own title to

represent the intellect and advanced political culture of a country as against all Philistines—for all established authorities, from the prefect and the chief of police to the Minister of the Interior are Philistine. Now the Salamanca students had started a political demonstration, in which they seem to have got no help from the townsfolk—who (as in most similar places) are fundamentally anti-university. There was a riot in the cloistered Plaza Mayor, followed by an attack on the police. Now the police, though not too numerous, had carbines, and only a few of the students had revolvers. They were soon routed, and took refuge in the splendid University buildings—with their richly decorated statue-studded façade—where they barred themselves in, insulted their pursuers out of the windows, and fired a shot or two at them. The chief of the police thereupon lost his temper, and bade his men fire repeated volleys at the windows, from which they had been molested. Several students were killed, more wounded: the rest bolted out by back entrances, and the police took possession. The University was declared in a state of siege, and the students at once 'sent down'.

When I went round the buildings, a fortnight after the riot, I was shown about by an elderly janitor, whose teeth were chattering with rage at the memory of the recent incidents. Most of the front windows were shattered to pieces by carbine bullets, but the show place was the history lecture-room, where the janitor pointed out to me pools of dried blood upon the floor, and a very large map of Europe in the time of Charlemagne perfectly riddled with bullet-holes. All the volleys that had gone high had been caught by this unfortunate piece of cartography. Shaking his hand in wrath, the janitor told me that the University authorities had decided that

this room should be left for ever just as it was, in order that the blood and the shattered map should serve as a perpetual memorial of the brutality of the police and the wickedness of the Government. Alas for such resolves! When I went round Salamanca again, three years afterwards, in 1906, I found the front of the University in spick and span condition, new furniture fittings, newly painted walls, and a map of Europe in 1520 hanging in the back of the history lecture-room in very good condition. The University had been reopened the summer after the riots, and the only definite result of the explosion seemed to have been that the chief of the police had been removed, for excessive rigour at a time when the Government wanted to avoid all unnecessary friction.

As I had occasion to mention before, my habitual spring visits to Spain, for the purpose of getting up topographical points relating to the Peninsular War, were stopped abruptly by the catastrophic events of 1914. We all had other things to think about than book-making between August 1914 and the long-drawn Treaty of Versailles. And it was not till 1924 that I started to finish my observations at San Sebastian, and till 1927 that I worked over the topography of the Bidassoa, the Nive, and the Nivelle. In the former year I went, for the first time, in an official capacity, being sent by the Foreign Office as British representative at a certain ceremonial at San Sebastian, viz. the opening by the Queen of Spain of the restored monuments of Wellington's officers and men, who fell at the storm of that fortress on August 31, 1813. I found, oddly enough, an old friend—General Arzadun—officiating as governor of the province—he had sent me many a note in earlier years as to the movements of the Spanish armies in the last period of the Peninsular War. I got

the impression, when we incidentally fell to discussing post-war politics, that the political position was not so happy as it might have been, the main cause of trouble being the early disasters of the war in Morocco against the mountaineers of the Riff. A series of defeats with much loss of life had naturally brought unpopularity upon the Government, and not merely on the Government but on the monarchy. Nothing could have been more helpful to the ever-present Republican opposition than the repeated failures of the army to deal with a comparatively insignificant enemy. That the Riff coast is a complicated cross-puzzle of ravines, as bad as or worse than the north-west frontier of India, explains much: but there had been a terrible amount of mismanagement and disorganization, and some nasty incidents of panic. Altogether the effect was not satisfactory, and the Cortes was getting more and more unmanageable, when opposition criticism had become so easy.

This visit of October 1924 was almost my last sight of Spain. I cannot pass on without relating one most absurd memory. At the main ceremony, the British Ambassador had told me to put on the most official costume that I could manage, when I had to make my speech to the Queen of Spain. Having had suspicions that something of the sort might be wanted, I had brought my scarlet doctor's gown along with me. When I had spoken and stepped back, I heard one Spanish general say to another, 'Now what sort of a costume can that be?', to which his neighbour, not to be discomfited by mere ignorance, replied with decision, 'Those are the gala robes of an Anglican bishop!' This was the first and last time that I have ever been taken for an ecclesiastic.

I must confess that the fortunes of Spain since I last set foot upon its soil have been very saddening to me.



That after so many years of constitutional government, very cleverly managed, the régime should have been abandoned after constant deadlocks with the Cortes, and changes of ministry, and the King should have taken refuge in the old national expedient of a military dictatorship was disappointing. The country had undoubtedly benefited from the fifty years of peace that it had been enjoying—but the political machine was out of order. As in other southern countries, the 'disease of Parliamentaryism', as the Latins call it, was judged to be growing incurable. Primo de Rivera's long dictatorship kept things more or less quiet upon the surface, but the bottom of the pot was boiling up more and more fiercely as each month went on, and criticism became yearly more venomous and more obviously well founded. If one pretends to have a constitution, it is difficult to go on indefinitely promising to restore its working, and then finding plausible reasons for delay.

I do not think that the recent dictatorship was nearly so autocratic as previous XIXth-Century dictatorships had been: it certainly did not deal so drastically with all opponents as does the Fascist régime in Italy. But all the same it was, and could well be represented as being, a reactionary anomaly. And the plea that it was keeping down worse evils could not be proved to be true until it had been removed. The events of the last few months have, I think, demonstrated the persistence of an old national phenomenon in Spain. The Radical or Republican party has at all times since its first strife with Ferdinand VII, more than a hundred years ago, always used the most vehement language about the liberty of the individual and the freedom of the Press. Such watchwords appeal to every inhabitant of Western Europe who has the theory of constitutional liberty impressed upon his mind. At the same time, whenever the

Radical or Republican party has achieved a momentary victory over the forces of reaction, it has always shown itself quite as regardless of the liberty of the individual and the freedom of the Press as the régime which it has overthrown. The story starts with the shooting in 1920 of General Elio, the author of the first Royalist *pronunciamiento* in revenge for the execution of Generals Porlier and Lacy, the first leaders of Radical rebellions, a few years before. And it has been an observed phenomenon that a successful Republican rising has always been followed by anarchic troubles of the worst sort, raised by the extremists, who used to call themselves *Exaltados* or Cantonalists, and now call themselves Communists. The new Government has invariably had to employ armed force, within a few months of coming into power, against the left wing of the body of the revolutionary party. At the same time it has to beware of a recrudescence of monarchical feeling, and has always acted with more energy against 'reactionaries' than against 'extremists'. The normal results of this, in the past, has been that the main body of quiet people, with something to lose, have grown more terrified of chaos than of reaction, and that the new Republican Government has grown as unpopular as the régime that it has overthrown. At the present moment we see Communist anarchy developing in every direction, and at the same time hundreds of Monarchists imprisoned on suspicion, and exiled untried to insanitary tropical colonies, and the complete suppression of all newspapers which dare to criticize the most drastic actions of the Government. Does this state of things show any superiority over the dictatorship against which the Republican party was protesting for so many years?

The old Republics, after having accumulated sufficient odium, were accustomed to fall before a military

*pronunciamiento*. It is obvious that the present state of affairs can only go on so long as the Army, as a whole, stands loyal to the Republic. There has been an immense change in the officering of the Army since the new Government came into power, and hundreds of officers who have been cashiered or put on half-pay are now in prison, on suspicion of favouring Monarchist conspiracies. The things that no one can know, without intimate knowledge of personalities, is whether the 'purge' has been so complete that the danger of a *pronunciamiento* has been removed. It is not sufficient to remove generals and colonels, if the subalterns are discontented. Indeed, there was once, some ninety years ago, a military rising at Madrid which was headed by sergeants, while (as tradition says) all their superior officers were at the opera—this was in 1836.

It is now said that the Republican Government is contemplating the reduction of the numbers of the Army by one-half—this can hardly be popular with the officers who know that they are to be treated as supernumeraries. One can only await further developments, noting first of all that there has been as yet no signs of movement in the North, where the old risings of the Carlists, the ultra-Monarchical party, always had their commencement. General Sangiurgi's abortive demonstration of August last took place in Andalusia, the least likely of all provinces (save Catalonia) for a successful reactionary *pronunciamiento*. One hardly expected that it could possibly succeed—it would have been another matter altogether had the trouble begun in Biscay or Navarre, where—according to recent reports—the Republican extremists in the larger towns have been burning Conservative clubs and monasteries. If there is anything to be learnt from the study of earlier revolutions, the North is the region where serious

trouble might be expected for any Republican régime. But, as a cynical historian once remarked, political prophecy is perhaps the most futile of all forms of human ratiocination. We can only 'wait and see', as Mr. Asquith used to observe.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE LAST DAYS OF THE MONARCHY IN PORTUGAL. I.

SEPTEMBER 27 TO OCTOBER 3, 1910

I MADE three long tours through Portugal in 1903, 1906, and 1910. But as my intention was simply and solely to familiarize myself with the topography of Wellington's marches and battle-fields, it was only the central sections of the country that came under my eye. I visited no places farther north than Oporto and Amarante, and no places south of Elvas. If I had been searching for Roman remains, or for interesting architecture, or merely for picturesque scenery, I should have had to explore the Alemtejo and Algarve in the south, and the Entre Douro-e-Minho and Tras-os-Montes in the north; but I was set on a much more limited objective. I should not have thought of recording these travels if it had not been that the last day of my third visit fell precisely at the moment when the Republican revolution broke out, and Portugal ceased to be a monarchy. I was in Lisbon on the actual day of the catastrophe, and made my way out of the country over railway-bridges that had been half blown up, and through stations where everything had gone out of gear, except provision for the passage of the Sud Express—the one thing that seemed to have impressed itself on the mind of Portuguese railway officials as a sacred object that must be pandered to, even in the midst of political chaos.

But before detailing my curious experiences in the Lisbon revolution of October 3-4, 1910, I am constrained to make some general remarks on Portugal, as I saw it in the last years of the rule of the house of Braganza. First and foremost is the impression as to the entire difference between Portugal and Spain—they are absolutely out of touch with each other. Portugal looks westward to the ocean, and turns its back on Spain: geographically they are as much estranged from each other as they are psychologically. This does not appear on the map, which gives a wholly false impression of their relation to each other. From the map one would gather that Portugal is simply the coast-lands at the mouth of those three great Spanish rivers, the Douro, the Tagus, and the Guadiana. One instinctively draws analogies from the Rhine, the Vistula, and the Danube: nothing could be more deceptive. One naturally thinks of a first-class river like the Douro or the Tagus as an artery of commerce and transport, with large towns at frequent intervals upon its banks. This is not the case. Owing to the peculiar orographical condition of Central Spain, all the rivers which start on the high plateau of Old Castile and the much higher plateau of New Castile have to find their way down to sea-level by sudden chutes and cañons, through the gaps in the irregular hills and deserts which form the boundary between Spain and Portugal. It is absolutely impossible to get a boat of any kind down the Tagus from Talavera—the last town of any size on that river in Spain, to Abrantes, the first large place in Portugal. There are 200 miles of unnavigable stream between them, for long stretches of which the river runs rapidly, sunk deep between cliffs, hurrying along to Portugal with a current that is irresistible in the rainy season, but shrinking down into a rocky bed strewn with

shallows in the summer. So with the Douro: there are 100 miles of intermittent rapids between Zamora, the last town in the upland of Old Castile, and S. João de Pesqueira, the last point to which the empty wine-barges creep up-stream from Oporto, to be filled again with the rough red wine of the Alto Douro, which is to be transformed into English Port by the cunning blenders at the metropolis of Northern Portugal. On the Guadiana, the third great international river of Spain and Portugal, the fall is not quite so rapid or fierce: but no boat can get up from Ayamonte, the port at its mouth, farther than Mertola, only a third of the way to Badajoz, the last big Spanish town on the river. In fact, Douro, Tagus, and Guadiana are not routes of commerce, but formidable military obstacles. Hence the roads do not follow the lines of the rivers in Spain and Portugal, as they do in almost all other civilized countries; in fact, they keep away from them, because most of the important towns lie back from the water, not on one of the great streams, but on some lesser unnavigable tributary. There is absolutely no road at all along the central Tagus valley, and the modern railway makes a long loop to the south to avoid it. And similarly on the Douro there is no direct line at all between Zamora and Oporto, and the traveller who wishes to get from the mouth of the Douro to the towns on its middle course takes a preposterous circuit by way of Salamanca and Medina del Campo.

There looks on the map as if there was no obvious boundary between Spain and Portugal, neither a sundering river, such as parts Bulgaria from Rumania, nor a well-marked mountain chain like the Pyrenean barrier between France and Spain. As a matter of fact there is a boundary—a broad desert of uninhabited wilds, covered with gum-cystus and pine—not a

well-marked range of hills, but a high, rough upland for the most part trackless and barren. There are only two short fronts where the desert is not continuous, and a fortress on each side blocks the two gaps by which Spanish invasions of Portugal have always taken place—where Almeida for long ages looked at Ciudad Rodrigo, and Elvas at Badajoz.

Geographically, then, Spain and Portugal turn their backs on each other, and see little of each other. And psychologically the state of things is the same—the two nations detest each other, and the dream of a united Iberian Peninsula (occasionally hinted at by Spanish Republicans) is a vain illusion. The only time at which the two States were ever united was in what the Portuguese call 'the sixty years' captivity' (1580–1640), when Philip II overran the smaller kingdom by force of arms, and Philip IV lost it the moment that a rebellion became feasible by the aid of foreign allies. This memory is resented to-day by every Portuguese who has the slightest smattering of his own national history, and the idea of being ruled from Madrid is the one nightmare which would unite all Portuguese of all possible political factions in desperate resistance. If Spaniards look down on the Portuguese—the Portuguese absolutely hate the Spaniards. I remember two trifling illustrative incidents which give the situation in a nutshell. Once I was at a state dinner at Lisbon, at which the Spanish *chargé d'affaires* presented himself in a very curious uniform, half civil, half military. I asked my neighbour, a Portuguese general, if this was not a sad solecism. 'Of course it is,' he replied, 'but what would you expect? *All* Spaniards do *everything* wrong, *always*.' The other anecdote comes from the opposite end of the social scale. At the frontier station of Villar Formoso I tipped a railway porter rather handsomely for



carrying my luggage, and said 'muchas gracias.' 'Oh, sir, do say muito obregado,' said the man, 'and don't use Spanish. But I am very much your debtor.' Portugal has had her civil wars and her revolutions, but they have seldom had anything to do with contemporary political waves of trouble in Spain. There was once a movement in the 1830's, when (by a curious coincidence) a Clerical-Absolutist uncle was contending with a Constitutionalist niece in each country, and the two pretenders got into touch. But the origins of the two civil wars were different, and their ends were different also, and the fortunes of the one did not effect the other in the least. This was no exception to the general rule that Spain and Portugal work independently of each other in the matter of politics. The establishment of the Republic at Lisbon in 1910 had no direct effect on Madrid. And I cannot see that the establishment of the Republic in Spain in 1931 has had any political effect whatever in Portugal.

When I was first in Portugal in the spring of 1903 King Carlos was reigning: he was assassinated in the open street on February 1, 1908, along with his eldest son, Prince Louis Philippe; and during my last visit in 1910 his younger son Manuel reigned in his stead. This assassination of King Carlos and his son was a desperate affair, carried out by three fanatics who knew that their lives must be forfeited on the instant, for they waylaid the royal carriage while it was driving up from the railway station, and were sabred by the royal aides-de-camp within thirty seconds of their firing, all too effectively, into the windows. Such a deed contrasts most markedly with the majority of plots to kill a king, where the murderers cast bombs from a distance, or fire from a window, after having secured a 'get-away' by some back door. It certainly required wild courage and contempt of death. Countries where such

things happen are obviously in an unsatisfactory political condition, but the odd thing about Portugal was that one might travel about the land for weeks on end, early in this century, and not come across the least signs of discontent save in Lisbon, and to a much lesser extent in Oporto and the university town of Coimbra.

The cause of this is that all political life in Portugal centred in the noisy capital, with its professional politicians, its *arrivistes*, and its detestable slum and dock proletariat. The water-side Lisbon mob has a larger proportion of black blood in its veins than any other mob in Europe, due to reckless intermarriage among the lower classes with the Congo nigger, and to a lesser extent with the low-caste Hindu from the old Portuguese possessions in India, where Goa and other places still survive as remnants of a lost empire. There is no trace of colour-feeling in Portugal—as is sufficiently shown by the physiognomy of a Lisbon mob: even among the educated and governing classes I was surprised to find that a ‘touch of the tar brush’ did not seem unusual, and was not remarked upon.

Now the provinces or the ‘back-country’ in Portugal are purely at the mercy of Lisbon, because they contain no elements round which resistance to revolution could coalesce. The old noble and gentle families seem to have got disassociated from the land—you would drive for miles without seeing a country house—and a title implied even less connection with the place from which the title-holder derived it, than is the case in modern England. As in pre-revolution France, and even more so, the *noblesse* had ceased to have local power, because it had ceased to reside. The other great influence which one might have expected to provide a conservative check on revolutionary tendencies would be the Church—which *had* a very considerable power in the

neighbouring Spain. But the Portuguese clergy seemed to be poor and uninfluential—the dissolution of the monasteries by the Liberal party sixty years back, and the confiscation of Church lands appear to have had a permanent effect. The padres whom I met seemed to be mostly mere peasants in orders—ill-educated and apathetic. Indeed, I believe that the Freemasons had more political influence in Portugal than the clergy—they were certainly much more active.

Provincial Portugal then was a peasant-country, with no resident directing class to lead it, or to voice its grievances. The only things in which it took interest were local economic conditions of the most simple kind. I always found the upland peasant a most courteous and honest and hard-working fellow—ready to give information, to tell old tales and traditions, and to go a mile out of his way to show me a point of interest. He had a very strong memory of the old Peninsular War campaigns all over the Beira and the Estremadura. But he had no political ideas at all, probably never voted at election times, looked upon the king as a very distant figure—though kings there always had been and always would be—and regarded Parliament at Lisbon, with its politicians, as an unpopular and inscrutable taxing machine. In short, the peasantry of upland Portugal were by no means Republicans, but they were by no means useful supporters of the monarchy. When they heard from Lisbon that the revolution had broken out, and that the king had fled, they did nothing, and made no attempt to oppose the new Government. If the rising had been put down, as it most certainly ought to have been, they would have been pleased rather than otherwise, and would have continued to pursue their simple mode of existence, as they had from time immemorial. The only things, I believe, which could possibly rouse

them from their workaday apathy would be a Spanish invasion, or a Communist proposal to nationalize all their little plots of land.

Four-fifths of the nation being profoundly uninterested in Lisbon politics, it may be asked how it came to pass that the monarchy was upset by a comparatively small number of plotters in the capital, after a struggle of a most feeble kind. The answer is that the ruling class under the monarchy was justly discredited, and had ceased to command any respect. Portuguese politics had been rather farcical for the last fifty years. There were two groups of Monarchists, who called themselves respectively the 'Regenerators' and the 'Progressives'. The difference between them was merely that between the 'ins' and 'outs'—between those who were for the moment enjoying the sweets of office and those who were not. It had come at last to what the discontented called the 'Rotativist' system, that is to say, that when a cabinet had got sufficiently discredited by its financial or foreign policy, it resigned, and the opposition came into power, until it also grew impossible by reason of its blunders, and gave way to its predecessors. It did not very much matter whether Regenerators or Progressives were ruling—and the statesmen of both parties were accused, and I think not unjustly, of making themselves friends of the 'mammon of unrighteousness' while in office, and retiring to lucrative directorships when the time came for resignation—after the manner of the unjust steward in the parable. Of course, as in all countries living under a degenerate parliamentary party system, there was any amount of family and group nepotism, and minor intriguing, and creation of unnecessary, if usually ill-paid, bureaucratic offices. This tendency, I may remark, became even more marked after the fall of the monarchy, when the

Republicans (who had always been protesting against corrupt misgovernment) created more useless officials than ever—since every good partisan had to be paid for his services—and got the national finances into an even worse state than the 'Rotativists' had ever managed to produce.

Just about the time of my second visit to Portugal (1906) King Carlos, taking a lead in politics which Portuguese kings had not endeavoured to exercise for many a year, had dismissed both parties, and put in office a sort of dictator, João Franco, reputed to be the only honest politician in the kingdom. Franco prorogued Parliament, suppressed seditious journals, went into cases of official scandals, and tried to produce a balanced budget. The experiment was a failure, and brought immense unpopularity upon the heads of the king and the dictator. Poor King Carlos was assassinated on February 1, 1908, not so much because he was a bad king as because his murder was the most striking protest which the Republican party could put in against the Monarchical system. He was the very largest sovereign that I ever saw—six feet and twenty stone. When his cousin, Edward VII, stood beside him, during his last visit to Lisbon in 1906, Carlos looked double the size of the English king.

On the murder of this unfortunate prince, Franco was dismissed, washing his hands of the whole business—'*honnête homme trompé s'éloigne, et ne dit mot*'. 'Rotativism' began again, more unpopular than ever, and was operating in its old style right down to the end of the monarchy in 1910.

King Manuel, who succeeded to his murdered father, was unfortunately not the personage to save a declining dynasty. Only nineteen when he came to the throne, twenty-one when he was expelled, he had neither the

experience nor the prestige required to cope with the situation. He had been brought up as a younger son, with no expectation of the crown, since his elder and more virile brother, Luiz Filippe—assassinated along with his father—had been in training as successor. I met him several times, thrice when he was on the throne, four times while he was in exile in England. I found him quite intelligent, very well read in Portuguese history, and with a nice taste for art and architecture, and a real love for books. Unfortunately he had no force: his nerve had been shattered for good by the awful drive which he took on February 1, 1908, with his father's dead body before him, and his brother's bleeding against his shoulder—he had a bullet himself in his left arm. After that experience he had assassination on the brain, and was always expecting to be shot at—he gave a start at every unexpected noise. Though he made quite a good figure at a state ceremony—remember that he was only twenty-one—he had no initiative whatsoever—allowed his mother to dominate him in private life, and obeyed the directions of his unpopular and self-seeking ministers in all his public acts. There have been young men of twenty-one who could cope with a rather desperate situation, and make themselves romantic figures fitted to command loyalty. Manuel II of Braganza was not of that style. It was impossible for the Republican party to represent him as a tyrant—in that rôle he would have been unconvincing—but it was possible to hold him up as a degenerate—which was wholly unfair. He would have made a very decent king in quiet times, and have shown well when opening museums or public libraries. Unfortunately something else was required in 1910.

The Republican party, which overthrew the house of Braganza, was much of the same style as other anti-

monarchical parties in other Latin states. That is to say, it was essentially the party of the discontented—partly of the idealists, much more of the *arrivistes*, who were kept out of the position and jobs that they wanted by the nepotistic gangs of politicians who called themselves Regenerators or Progressives. It embraced all the men in every profession who found themselves kept back because others with more powerful influences stepped in before them. This was equally true of lawyers, doctors, teachers, minor civil servants, junior officers in the Army and Navy, and ambitious young business men. They were all Freemasons and violently anti-clerical. The usual name for their more violent section was Carbonarios—borrowed from the Italian Carbonari, who had worked against the old reactionary governments in the early XIXth Century. They were very strong in the University of Coimbra—the only university of Portugal—the Radical student is the common type in all Latin countries—and they could count on a great deal of support from the *intelligenza* in general. Without being an *arriviste* or a climber, or dominated entirely by personal interests, a man might have a real and honest dislike and contempt for the monarchical régime of the last fifty years, with all its jobbery and wire-pulling. Such feelings were nourished by a good many respectable idealists—literary men and professors and such-like—but (as usual) it was not the respectable idealists who made the revolution, but the discontented climbers. But the idealists looked on with approval at attempts to shake the monarchy, though they might reasonably have distrusted the purity of the motives of the active malcontents who carried them out. And the long rule of the 'Rotativists' had produced a feeling of apathy among all those who were not personally interested in the predominance of Pro-

gressives or Regenerators, so-called. The occasional outbursts of violence which had been seen before 1910 had all been the work of a minority of hot-heads, generally men who conceived themselves to have personal grievances against the monarchical bureaucracy—people who considered that they had lost a job unjustly, or had been blighted in their career by some twist of official intrigue. The extreme working of this sense of rancorous discontent had been seen in the act of these isolated fanatics who shot King Carlos and his son; their crime was not connected with any plot for a general insurrection, but was a result of individual brooding over grievances, leading to a contempt for life as compared with the world-shaking effect that could be produced by an act of theatrical revenge. Buicca, the leader of the party, was a middle-aged ex-schoolmaster, with a career of disappointments, a typical soured member of the *intelligenzia*.

Things were working up for an explosion, of a violence not seen before, at the moment when I made my third long tour in Portugal in September and October 1910. The feckless quarrels of the two monarchical parties continued, and a new 'Regenerator' ministry under Teixeira de Sousa had just evicted a 'Progressist' ministry in the summer (August 28th), and was getting out a programme intended to be popular, including proportional representation and financial economies. The serious thing at the election had been that all the Lisbon seats had been won by Republicans, and that the anti-Monarchical party was going to be more heavily represented in the Chamber than ever before. The capital was being organized for revolt in a more effective fashion than in former years by the working of secret societies, the best remembered of which was one called *Formiga Branca*, the White Ant, from its



function of eating out the interior of an office, a regiment, or a ship's company, without showing any exterior indication of its activity, just as the insect deals with a book or a piece of furniture. There were secret Republican 'cells' in all the public offices, especially the post-office and the telegraph department, whose destined function was to cut communications, and make the transmission of orders impossible, when the projected insurrection should break out. I had some experience of their work on the railway, when I was leaving Portugal on the first day of the troubles. The Government was aware of the existence of these secret societies, but does not seem to have been able to detect their chiefs or their organization. More especially was this the case in the garrison of Lisbon, where several regiments, locally raised from the recruits of the capital, were absolutely honeycombed with sedition. The crews of the fleet were in still worse condition, but this was suspected, as there had been mutinous outbreaks several times in recent years in that very ineffective establishment. Both in the Army and the Navy there was only a small proportion of the officers affected by the Republican propaganda, which, of course, mainly appealed to all who considered themselves unfairly kept back in promotion by political influence. But the disaffection was rife in the lower ranks. In many corps the commanding officers do not seem to have been aware of it—I formed an impression that discipline was very loose, and that many officers seemed to be more familiar with the café than the drill-ground, and to know or care very little about their men.

The new Teixeira de Sousa ministry had a plan for stirring national enthusiasm, and producing a demonstration in favour of the monarchy and of themselves, by holding a great patriotic ceremony to commemorate

the hundredth year of the first great victory of the Peninsular War, in which Portugal had a prominent part—Wellington's defeat of Masséna's army on the heights of Bussaco on September 27, 1810. Here the newly raised Portuguese army had done half the fighting, suffered half the loss, and won for good the confidence of their commander, who ever after freely used them in battle. The ceremony was to be essentially military, and was to be held on the battle-ground of Bussaco itself, not in discontented Lisbon, where it might have met with a boycott, or even with seditious interruptions.

There was a palace for the king's headquarters conveniently placed at the back of the ridge on which the Anglo-Portuguese line had stood, good railway communication from the plain below, and the broad, sloping plateaux where the allied army had been arrayed gave plenty of space on which the pageant could be staged. Detachments from all the regiments which had fought on September 27, 1810, were to represent their predecessors, and a guard of honour for the king was dressed in the uniforms of the old army—the high plumed black shakos, blue cut-away coats and white facings that Wellington knew. The political intention was to show that the king honoured his army, and to confirm its officers in the loyalty which the vast majority of them certainly professed. A great military banquet was to follow the review, more than 400 officers, from captain upwards, were to be invited to it. I was present, and often reflect nowadays, with a sigh, how little all the enthusiasm displayed at that feast availed to protect the monarchy at the explosion in Lisbon only one short week afterwards. But of this more anon.

Now in the autumn of 1910 I was very desirous of paying a third visit to Portugal, for the purpose of

inspecting the line of Masséna's disastrous retreat in March 1811, and the battle-spots along it. I had issued in October 1908 the third volume of my *Peninsular War*, after mastering the topography of Wellington's earlier Portuguese campaigns, but the much rougher ground, far from any modern railway, over which Masséna went back to Spain, was unknown to me, and I felt that I ought to see it before writing of it. My account of Bussaco in my third volume was well known to several Portuguese acquaintances, civil and military, and had (as I knew) given satisfaction to them, as bringing out (what Napier's great book always denied) the very creditable share which the Portuguese army had taken in the defence of its own country. Hearing of the great centenary celebration that was at hand, I inquired whether I could not manage to be present at it, and afterwards to go over the line of Masséna's operations in 1811, which would certainly require to be done on a motor. My Lisbon friends thought that it could be managed, and assured me of a friendly reception. So I took my passport to be 'visaed' at the Portuguese Legation in London, and started off on September 20, 1920, for the three days' journey to Lisbon by the Sud Express. It was while getting my passport 'visaed' that I had the first hint that things were perhaps a little gloomy in Portugal—the attaché who did the signing and stamping for me remarked that he 'thought it would be all right' and that there could be no harm in my visit, so far as he knew. This was the reverse of encouraging, considering that I had every indication from Lisbon that I should be welcome. But I did not at the moment attach any importance to the somewhat worried expression of the young diplomat.

I reached Lisbon on September 23rd, and received a much more enthusiastic reception than I had expected.

I found waiting for me at my hotel an Anglo-Portuguese acquaintance, Rafael Reynolds, of Barreiro, one of the most important members of the English community in Portugal, and a considerable land-owner. He told me that I must come off at once to the new Minister of War, General Raposo Botelho, who was expecting me. Now from the point of view of my own desires, General Botelho was exactly the sort of minister that I wanted to meet. He was a literary man and an author, who had spent his early service years in teaching geography at the Military College, and had written the second and third volumes of the compendium of Universal Geography issued by the Government; later he had been made director of the Military Co-operative Society—something like our Army and Navy Stores, but an official institution. He had never heard a shot fired in war—but no more had any of the rest of the officers of the Portuguese Army. The new Prime Minister had given him the charge of the War Office because he was accustomed to organization and desk work, was a pleasant person to deal with, and was not likely to give trouble as a colleague: he was elderly and a little invalidish—the last person in the world suited to deal with a sudden insurrection.

I find that I wrote that night the following note: 'Reynolds took me off at once to the Minister of War, a very propitious old general, who was most polite, told me that he knew all about my book, and that he had made special arrangements for me at Bussaco. And he would get me a military motor to run over the line of Masséna's retreat, when the festivities of the Centenary were over, and an officer who knew French to look after me. Moreover, that there would be a bedroom reserved for me at Bussaco for the nights of the 26th and 27th, and that I should certainly see the King,

who was well acquainted with my work. I should meet the Duke of Wellington, who was the only other Englishman who was to be present at the ceremony, except representatives of the British Legation. General Botelho then sent me on to see the Committee of Research, who were in charge of the details of the show, a colonel and two captains, all of historical tastes, and all acquainted with my Bussaco lucubrations. We discussed many things—one point which afterwards struck me as ominous was that they said that the regiment with the best Peninsular record was to furnish the guard for the royal standard and to be given new colours. I asked whether it was to be regiment A, which I thought on the whole the most distinguished corps. 'No,' said the Colonel, 'that is a Lisbon regiment, and not considered particularly sound—we have chosen the 3rd Caçadores, a north-country regiment with a very good set of officers.' This was also a corps with a fine old record, but the reason for which the other was set back looked rather suggestive.

I stopped for two days more in Lisbon, looking at things which I had missed on my previous visits. Rafael Reynolds took me round several old buildings of interest, which do not figure for what they are worth in the guide-books. On the last day of my stay General Botelho sent for me again, and gave me a most formidable document, ordering all military authorities everywhere to lend me all possible assistance on my travels. He also told me, what far exceeded my expectations, that I was to be considered a guest of the State, and that all the expenses of my tour were to be paid by the officer told off to be my guide during my explorations. Naturally I made my very best expressions of gratitude, in French, to the kindly old gentleman.

I went up to Bussaco on the 25th, in a train mainly

filled with officers and civil officials, who were invited to the celebration, but got out at Pampilhosa in order to enjoy the lovely uphill drive to the Palace through the long black fir-woods, whose beauty I remembered from 1906 and wished to appreciate again. Then I called on the Master of the Ceremonies—General da Costa, a lively old gentleman talking fluent French, and full of his own troubles, having been set to manage a pageant for the first time, as he complained, at sixty years of age, and a pageant with 5,000 performers—if anything went wrong he would be the man to be blamed. And the King and the Duke of Wellington were due next morning, when he was not *quite* sure that everything would be ready!

The State, I found, had put me up very handsomely, and I dined with a very large and lively company, mostly military, but including some ladies and a small contingent from the English colony at Oporto, who are (or were in 1910) considered personages of no small importance owing to the wealth which the port-wine trade brings into Portugal.

Next morning (Monday, September 26th) I went over three miles of the battle-field with Rafael Reynolds, following the long plateau on which Wellington's troops were placed, and looking down on the steep slopes up which the French made their two desperate assaults in column, the one above the village of Sula, and the other at the pass of San Antonio de Cantaro. The view was gorgeous, the high ridge commanding a panorama of all the dappled hills and valleys of Northern Portugal as far as the distant mountains on the Spanish frontier. The September air was balmy, and the visibility extraordinary. I had a long talk in the afternoon with another of the ministers, Azevedo de Castello Branco, who told me that he had volunteered to take charge of me at the great ceremony on the fol-

lowing day. I was to come along in his motor to the royal platform. In the evening the King and his suite turned up—also the Duke of Wellington—and took possession of the white marble halls of the little palace. I was introduced to Dom Manuel by the War Minister and had some courteous words of welcome.

Next day (Tuesday, September 27th) was the main celebration—it started with a 'military Mass', the Bishop of Coimbra officiating at the altar erected on the broad flat summit of the heights, where in 1810 the British 1st Division had been drawn up. The bishop (unlike most Portuguese clergy) was a very fine figure of a man—eighty years of age, but with a good strong voice and nearly six feet of stature—he looked like a XVIIth-Century portrait in his high mitre, as he stretched out his pastoral staff and blessed the Army, drawn up in a vast semicircle by companies along the hill-side. We were placed in a group facing him, with the King and the royal standard in front of us. After the Mass the troops in the old Peninsular War uniforms defiled in front of the King, with a band of drum and fifes of the period playing an old-time march. Dom Manuel was now mounted, and took the salute from behind the shadow of the immense blue and white standard waving above him, quite a dignified figure, sitting upright on a big brown horse. He presented a flag of honour to the 3rd Caçadores, one of Crawford's old Light Division regiments, which the committee had chosen as the most distinguished corps in the Army. Then the detachments from all the other corps defiled before him. There was a very large crowd of peasantry from the neighbourhood, looking on from the higher slopes—all in their Sunday best—the women with bright-coloured handkerchiefs worn under pork-pie hats, and displaying heavy gold earrings and chains—

the men with broad sombreros and bright scarves round their waists, and all carrying the invariable long pole or walking-stick, without which they are never seen. They seemed in very good temper, and cheered the King heartily at his arrival and departure. Who could have guessed how little all this loyalty was to avail a short week later!

The ceremonies and the defilade of the troops had taken a good many hours, and though the day was not too hot, and the breeze very pleasant, everyone was pretty tired when we adjourned to the military banquet, to which all the officers above the rank of captain had been invited—about 400 of them. I have its large and showy *menu* card before me as I write this, with a *caçador* of 1810 waving the Portuguese royal standard on its front. Everyone seemed enthusiastically merry, the King made a rousing speech about the great history of the Portuguese Army, and the orations in reply brimmed over with praises of the house of Braganza. We finished the repast with port of 1880—highly appreciated, though the natives usually leave this generous wine to the English buyer, and drink much lighter stuff.

That night I dined with the King, the ministers, the generals, and the Duke of Wellington—who had been the most majestic figure at the review, with the exception of the old Bishop of Coimbra, for he shone in the bright scarlet and bearskin of a colonel of the Grenadier Guards, which blazed out marvellously among the Portuguese blues. Told to put on whatever official dress I could manage, I had myself gone through the day in dress clothes, with my Oxford gown and hood over them—which had, at any rate, the merit of being unique at the show. We were sixteen at table, all very pleased with the success of the ceremony, which had gone off splendidly. The King seemed in good spirits, and con-



versed freely with everybody, rejoicing that a difficult day was over. As I made my adieux, he gave me a Portuguese order—which I have never been able to wear! The hill-sides, besides the palace, were noisy to a very late hour with bands and dancing; the soldiers and the peasant girls kept it up till daylight did appear.

On Wednesday, September 28th, everyone rose late—as was natural after such a fatiguing day, and formal adieux were paid all round—the Court went off to Cintra, the soldiers to their garrisons, all apparently in good spirits: they were cheering from the windows of their crowded trains. The old Minister of War made over to me a very good Panhard car, a very charming captain named, like himself, Botelho, and so I suppose a relative, and a broad smiling chauffeur, who proved himself a very good driver in the rough work of our next three days of travel.

And so on the 29th and 30th of September and the 1st of October I was able to carry out my much cherished plan of going over the line of Masséna's retreat from Santarem as far as the Ponte Murcella, where, after all the rear-guard combats of March 1811, Wellington finally gave up the rapid chase of the French, and permitted his harassed enemy to make the last few days of the journey to Spain in comparative safety. This was a most enjoyable turn, Rafael Reynolds and Captain Botelho were excellent travelling companions, both extremely interested in the Peninsular War, and keen on seeing every point where fighting had taken place. We started by running out to our farthest point, the banks of the Alva river at Ponte Murcella, and worked back from thence to the lines of Torres Vedras, taking the campaign backward, so to speak, since we ended where Masséna began. This was a lovely countryside: there were whole tracts like Killiecrankie, narrow

roads between picturesque mountain-streams (the Ceira and the Eça), and sheer precipices. I remember one point, in a hairpin turn above a cliff, where our motor met a whole herd of half-wild long-horned cattle, and had to close in to the overhanging rocks to let them defile by. We dismounted and explored on foot successively the rough and wooded sites of the combats of Foz do Arouce, Miranda de Corvo, Casal Novo, Condeixa and Redinha, and the defile through the town of Pombal, where Ney made his first stand. At Redinha, on the Soure river, a curious incident happened. We dismounted to look at the old bridge across which Mermet's retreating battalions were shelled by the guns of Picton's 3rd division. There was a new house just at the bridge-head, and the masons were scraping the partly dry bed of the stream for sand to make their mortar. Just as we were watching them, they dug up an unexploded British shrapnel shell, and afterwards two others. These had obviously fallen into the water, narrowly missing the bridge, on March 12, 1811, and had been lying in the sand for just a century. We begged one of them from the master-builder, and I took it back to London, and presented it to the United Service Museum. It contained thirty-two small round bullets, but the powder around them had decayed into an impalpable red dust.

On October 1 we got back to Lisbon, after a most successful tour, with notebooks crammed with local details of topography—passing in the late afternoon through the lines of Torres Vedras, where many of the redoubts were still easily recognizable, as their magazines had been hewn in the solid rock, and their embrasures were lined with massive stones. The 2nd of October had to be devoted to paying ceremonial visits to the various magnates who had been so obliging—I

had a vague feeling that something was wrong with the city—the main disquieting feature was lowering crowds of the lower classes: I learnt that there was a lightning strike of the cork-cutters, a most important body, just called, and that the Prime Minister was in negotiation with their leaders. But strikes, even strikes with a political object, are familiar phenomena. More ominous was my parting visit to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who had been so courteous to me at Bussaco. Generally his lobbies were crowded, but this morning I found no one there save myself and one old priest—the minister was evidently ill at ease. He told me that the King was just returning in haste to Lisbon to receive a visitor whose advent was unexpected, the President of the Brazilian Republic, who had turned up in a warship, some days before he had been expected, and that he had been forced to improvise a State dinner in a hurry. This, however tiresome, since the Minister for Foreign Affairs had to deal with foreign magnates, did not seem to explain Signor Castello Branco's worried aspect. The King, he said, was coming down from Cintra to meet the President that day.

The Brazilian visit was, however, quite eclipsed as a subject of interest that afternoon by a sensational murder. Professor Miguel Bombarda, a newly elected M.P. for Lisbon East, was one of the chief leaders of the Republican party; he was a Freemason, who spent a large part of his energy in declaiming against clericalism in and out of season. By profession he was director of the Central Lunatic Asylum of Lisbon. At three o'clock on the 2nd he was shot by a patient who had just been discharged as cured, but who utilized his first hour of liberty in buying a revolver and coming back to the asylum to kill the doctor. The rumour at once went round the Republican party that Bombarda

had been murdered by the Jesuits, or (as some varied the tale) by a Government police spy. There was much excitement in the city, and stories were put about to the effect that other assassinations of prominent Republicans were to follow. The police went round that evening tearing down newspaper placards which said that the doctor had been shot by a clerical fanatic.

The town therefore was in a state of suppressed excitement when I went off by the Sud Express on October 3rd. I could see, even in the short drive from my hotel on the quay to the central station, that there was trouble afoot, but of the scale of that trouble I had no suspicion. Many times before there had been Republican demonstrations in Lisbon—all suppressed without much trouble. Having seen the apparent enthusiasm of the Army at the Bussaco ceremonies only a week before, I supposed that it was in perfect condition to deal with any outbreaks of sedition. I was far from foreseeing that an extraordinary combination of mismanagement and timidity would permit of the overthrow in two days of an old-established monarchy that had lasted 800 years. And I am still convinced that with ordinary courage and energy the insurrection could have been crushed—for it was almost as badly organized as was the Government defence.

One curious incident marked the hours of my long railway journey, which was inside the Portuguese frontier—the route was by a newly opened line across the rough and almost unpeopled country along the Zezere river, and past Castello Branco in the 'Beira Baixa'. We were halted in the late afternoon in a wild mountain spot far from any station, and told that a bridge over a ravine was unsafe. Someone had been trying to blow it up, apparently, and, though the explosion had not been wholly effective, the bridge was

in a dangerous condition. After a long wait the engine tried the roadway, and found that it would stand, though there was a tilt to one side in the structure. Then the carriages were unhooked from each other, and pushed over the bridge, one by one, by hand. We were a little off the perpendicular as we crossed, and there was below a ravine sixty feet deep, with a rocky water-course at its bottom—altogether a nasty place to fall into, if the express had been going full speed and all in one heavy mass. There was much discussion in the train as to the meaning of this attempted outrage, but no one, so far as I know, got at the explanation that there was a general insurrection planned for that evening in Lisbon, and that among its side-shows were to be arrangements for cutting the main railway lines into the capital. Like all details of this rebellion, this one had been incompletely carried out; the bridge was injured, but not destroyed. It was a typical example of the inefficiency shown in all the Republican plans of October 3, 1910. We passed along the rest of our route to the Spanish frontier an hour or so late: there seemed to be some worry in the last Portuguese stations, Guarda and Villar Formoso, but I attributed this merely to the fact that the great train of the day was woefully out of its time table. That night I slept comfortably between Ciudad Rodrigo and Valladolid in my bunk, while Lisbon was all aflame. And next day, as we rolled along by Burgos and Vittoria and Irun, the Portuguese monarchy was being overthrown. By the time that the Sud Express reached Paris the house of Braganza had fallen—but I had not the least idea of it. On October 4th not a single telegraph wire out of Lisbon was operating: and the next thing that got through to Paris and London was the proclamation of the Republic, on the morning of October 5th.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE LAST DAYS OF THE MONARCHY IN PORTUGAL. II

OCTOBER 3-5, 1910

I HAD started for Paris and London with no more than a vague suspicion that things were looking unsafe in Portugal, and that trouble might be arising. But I had not the least conception how near and how serious that trouble would be. After I had left Lisbon on October 3rd things had gone on rapidly. The Republican party had been making preparation for a rising, ever since the new and unpopular Teixeira de Sousa ministry had come into office, and had prorogued the Parliament after three days of noisy debate. They had Lisbon marked out into districts, for each of which a nucleus of armed conspirators had been scheduled, with secret depots of rifles and bombs. Also they had elaborate lists of officers and sergeants in the various regiments of the garrison and ships of the fleet who were prepared to take arms at a given signal. The firing of the signal was in the hands of Admiral Candido dos Reis, the fighting head of the organization, a discontented and ambitious half-pay admiral who had taken to politics, and had just been elected at the head of the list of the successful Republican candidates for the constituency of Lisbon West. He had entire control over the secret organization in the Navy, which (as everyone knew) was much more completely riddled

with sedition than the Army. Candido dos Reis, by one of the most extraordinary instances of historical irony that ever happened, was destined to touch off the button that caused the explosion, but not to hear the burst—for he was dead before the crisis had reached its first development, as will soon be told. Otherwise he would have been first President of the Portuguese Republic.

The facts which led to the fixing of October 3rd for the insurrection were first the news that the strike of the cork-men was causing street trouble; second, that the providential murder of Dr. Bombarda had excited the whole Republican party into a paroxysm of fear and rage; and thirdly (and probably this was the most important factor in the decision), that the Minister of Marine had just issued orders that the *Dom Carlos*, the flagship of the Navy, most or the whole of whose crew was in the Republican interest, should steam to England for repairs to its armament, which the Lisbon arsenal was unable to execute. Whether this order was a stroke of cleverness on the part of the Minister of Marine, who was aware of the disaffection of the crew, or a matter of routine, I cannot say—probably the latter, for the minister, Dr. Marnoco, had no great reputation for ability, and was a civilian and a nonentity. But at any rate Admiral Reis had been relying on the crew of the flagship as one of the main elements in his *coup d'état*.

For the account of what followed on the resolve of the Republican Central Committee to strike their blow on the night of October 3rd, I am disregarding the greater part of the information published by the Provisional Government immediately after the insurrection, which is wholly tendencious and insincere. It speaks a great deal about heroism and patriotism—which to my mind was displayed by neither party

during this wretched affair—and it omits crucial but unpleasant facts—such as the suicide of Admiral Reis, at the moment when he believed that his whole scheme had failed. Nor do I attach much importance to the narratives of correspondents of foreign newspapers, of whom only one was present during the whole business, and he saw but one section of it. The best sources are the disculpatory publication of the Monarchists, of whom each (no doubt) was trying to ‘pass the slipper’, to shift the main responsibility on to the shoulders of someone else, and to minimize his own culpability. But between them they go into all the corners of the matter, fix hours and dates, and, when their narratives are put together, give a comprehensible account of a series of events in which no one of them was guiltless of grave mismanagement—if not of cowardice. Everyone who wrote to me—I had several correspondents in Lisbon—was wildly angry with someone else.

The Republican Central Committee met on the morning of October 3rd—just (I suppose) as I was driving to the railway station—in a private house in central Lisbon, and agreed that the rising should be fixed for midnight on the same day. They then sent out messages or cyphered telegrams to all their trusted agents, inside and outside Lisbon, ordering the commencement of operations at that fixed hour. It must have been, I suppose, one of these telegrams which nearly got my train into trouble! It is said that some of the committee were for the postponement of the rising for a day or two more, but that Admiral Reis and the sailors overbore the doubts of the procrastinating element, by pointing out the splendid start given by Dr. Bombarda’s murder, which was agitating the whole city, and the necessity of acting before the *Dom Carlos* should have been sent away to England for repairs. We



happen to possess the whole programme that was issued to the organizers, one main feature of which is that it shows grave miscalculation as to what elements of the garrison of Lisbon were ready to strike, and what elements were doubtful, or even hostile. It is noted that the 16th regiment, for example, had no organization, no officer in the plot, and would probably not move. This (as a matter of fact) was the corps which opened the revolt by shooting its colonel and marching out into the streets. On the other hand, the 1st regiment was catalogued as probably hostile, and requiring to be 'contained' by revolutionary forces—it never moved, refused to obey orders, and had two casualties in all to enter in the disgracefully short list of 20 killed and 92 wounded which represented the total losses of a long day of street fighting!

But to proceed to details. The main programme of the conspirators was that all the 'organized' regiments should deal with the majority of their officers who were not in the plot, by shooting or imprisoning them. When a large force should have been collected, it would be joined by the mass of civil insurgents. The whole would then march in two columns, the one against the Palace of Necessidades, overlooking the river, at the western end of the town, where the King was in residence that night, the other should make for the central squares, the Rocio and Comercio, where were the ministries, and take possession of them. The fleet was to shell the palace, and to disembark 600 men on the quays to join the main body of the revolted troops. Admiral Reis, who was to take command, waited on shore in full uniform at a friend's house near the river for the signal which was to give notice of the commencement of the rising—twenty-one guns to be fired by the ships, when the crews should have

seized their officers and hoisted the red and green flag of the republic. He was then to take command of the land force, while the navy was to start the bombardment of the Palace. By some mismanagement the salute was never given, and it was not till long after daybreak that some artillery fire began inland.

The only places where the programme issued by the Republican Committee was punctually carried out were the barracks of the 16th infantry, and of the artillery brigade of four batteries which was quartered at the north side of the town. Now there were in and about Lisbon four battalions of the line (Nos. 1, 2, 5, 16), two of Caçadores or rifles (Nos. 2 and 5), two regiments of cavalry (Nos. 2 and 4), four field batteries of 'the 1st Artillery brigade,' one horse battery, six companies of military police (municipal guards), and four troops of mounted police, with five companies of the not very warlike organization of *douaniers* (Guarda Fiscal). All the units were very low in numbers, partly because the leave-season was on, partly because of the general slackness of organization, which on the excuse of economy kept the cadres very low. No infantry battalion had 400 men available on the 3rd of October, the two cavalry regiments not more than 200 apiece, the artillery batteries not more than 60 gunners each. It resulted that in spite of the formidable list of units present in Lisbon that day, there were not more than 3,000 line troops available, with about 800 police and 700 *douaniers*. This makes less than 5,000 all told: but the original fighting force of the revolutionaries was far smaller.

The scheme drawn out by Admiral Reis only got complete fulfilment, as we have already said, in two places. At the barracks of the 16th line a number of the rank and file rushed the arms-racks at the appointed

midnight hour and ran confusedly into the courtyard. The officers had been warned from the War Ministry that there might be trouble: the colonel was in his quarters, and a number of the juniors sitting up in the mess-room, some half asleep, some playing bridge. On hearing the tumult the colonel and many others ran out—the unfortunate commanding officer, Celestino da Costa, and a Captain Barros were shot dead at once by privates—the others, making no resistance, were hustled into the adjutant's office and shut up there under a guard. The gates of the barracks were then thrown open to a throng of armed civilians, who joined the mutineers. No officer of the 16th was implicated in the rising, and the command of the battalion was taken up by a naval man—Machado Santos—a desperado who long afterwards gave trouble to the Republican Government and fell in an unsuccessful *coup d'état*. Under charge of this adventurer, and of two young infantry officers belonging to another regiment, who had turned up with the civilians, the main body of the 16th line marched out of its barracks to join the artillery brigade, who were due to rise at the same moment.

At the artillery barracks, which lie up the hill from the long Avenida de Liberdade, the broad well-treed avenue which cuts through the centre of Northern Lisbon, things had gone much in the same way as at the barracks of the 16th line. At the appointed hour the revolutionaries, headed by a Captain Palla, had seized arms and arrested most of the officers—five or six of whom were mishandled, but none killed. The gates were thrown open, and a number of armed civilians admitted. Almost immediately after the sound of trumpets was heard, and the 16th line appeared in front of the barracks, with Machado Santos riding

at its head. So far so good, from the point of view of the rebels: they got out and horsed the four batteries belonging to the brigade, and prepared to march down the Avenida, where more units should have come to their aid, and to seize the ministries and the great central squares.

But now came the check: the rebels waited for an hour or so, expecting to hear the promised salute from the fleet, and to be joined by several other regiments quartered on the east side of Lisbon. But no gun-fire was heard, and presently individuals came hurrying up from the lower part of the town, to announce the discouraging fact that not one of the other corps, whose help had been promised, had risen against the Government. The situation thus produced was that there were assembled at the head of the Avenida perhaps 600 soldiers, and a mixed mob of half-armed civilians, with very few officers. The only favourable factor was that they had in their possession all the artillery in Lisbon—twenty-four field guns. The only other artillery in the neighbourhood was the horse battery in the suburban barracks at Queluz, some eight miles out from the centre of the city. There was no one in particular in command—Admiral Reis had not turned up. The rebels waited for the dawn, and meanwhile, since there was a high probability that they might be attacked themselves, instead of executing the intended raid on the palace and the ministries, they began to throw up barricades. At the north end of the long Avenida is a knoll, on the highest ground, with buildings on it and walls in a circus. This was then known as the Rotunda, and was a very commanding position. Here and in the neighbouring artillery barracks the insurgents fortified themselves, and waited in some trepidation for news and reinforcements. When nothing had hap-

pened at daybreak, some of the faint-hearted began to slink away. Machado Santos, who had taken command in default of the admiral, had great difficulty in preventing this *débandade* from becoming general.

Meanwhile what had happened in the lower city, and at the anchorage of the fleet in the river? Astounding as it may appear, the destined chief of the insurrection had committed suicide, under the impression that the whole affair was a failure, and that he was responsible for a shameful fiasco! Candido dos Reis, as we have mentioned before, was waiting in uniform, but with a big cloak round him, in a private house not far from the great square, for the signal guns from the fleet. The hour for them passed, and nothing was heard. On the other hand, the sound of the few rifle shots fired in the distant barracks of the 16th line, at the other end of the town, never reached his ears. He got no information that the plot had worked for a regiment which was down in the rebels' list as doubtful or useless. And at the artillery barracks there had been no firing. The admiral remained in a state of great mental distress, waiting in vain for news, till three o'clock—he then thought of taking a boat out to the anchorage of the fleet, to discover what had happened on shipboard. But just as he was about to start, an excited emissary came running to tell him that all the regiments had failed to rise in the nearer barracks—he even added (quite untruly) that the 16th had fired on Republicans who had tried to fraternize with them. Groaning 'All is lost! There is no one in Portugal capable of saving this unhappy country', the admiral told his staff to disperse, put on a civilian hat and coat over his uniform, and walked to the house of his sister, some little way off: having said his adieux there, without announcing his intention, he went down into the street and blew

out his brains, at five o'clock, just before dawn, while the rebels at the Rotunda were waiting in vain for his appearance. When the Republicans had managed their plot so badly, it seems almost incredible that they should have succeeded in their end. But the counter-measures of the Royalists were even worse conducted, and their demoralization was far more fatal than that of their enemies.

It remains to be seen what had happened on board the warships in the dark hours. Nothing can give a more convincing testimony to the lack of discipline and organization in the Portuguese Navy than the fact that, at a moment known to be critical, the captains of two of the larger ships were sleeping in the town in their private lodgings, and not on board their vessels. No doubt the Portuguese Navy was a stay-at-home force, which seldom took a cruise. But these were dangerous times, and there was known to be a bad spirit prevailing not only among the crews, but among many of the junior officers. And what can seem more absurd than a captain presenting himself at the gangway of his own ship four hours after it has gone into rebellion, and being told by his second lieutenant to take his choice between being shot or going back to shore? The only vessel on which there was any resistance to the mutiny was the flagship, the *Dom Carlos*, where the commander and a party of his officers, armed with revolvers, kept guard over the arms-chests for a long time, and prevented the royal flag from being hauled down. It was many hours before they were 'rushed' and knocked over, Captain Ferreira and two of his lieutenants being badly wounded, but no one killed. It was probably the fact that the flagship was being kept out of the rising for some time that prevented the firing of the guns, whose sound was to have conveyed to Admiral

Reis the news of the revolt of the fleet. The only naval officer who died on the side of the monarchy this day was Captain Chagas, the commander of the torpedo-boat squadron, who blew out his brains when he was beset by the men of his own unit, and saw that resistance was impossible.

In addition to the crews on the ships, the mutiny of the fleet extended to the large number of sailors at the naval barracks, in the suburb of Alcantara, by the river-side, not very far from the Royal Palace. This fact had a considerable influence on the fate of the insurrection, for it was the armed sailors from these barracks, helped by a certain number of Republican civilians, who kept employed a part of the royal forces on the fatal October 4th. But the really important consequence of the revolt of the fleet was that, with its heavy guns, the insurgents could shell the Palace, the ministries, and any part of the town, while the royalists had at their disposition only the single horse battery from Queluz. All the same, ships can damage, but cannot get possession of, a town, if its defenders are set on serious opposition, which (in this case) the majority of King Manuel's troops were not.

To proceed with the disgraceful story of the 4th of October. When the news of the outbreak of the 16th line and the artillery brigade was conveyed to the Prime Minister, the Minister of War, and the King, they were all of one mind that the suppression of the revolt was in charge of the officer commanding the division forming the garrison of Lisbon, not of themselves. The King and the Ministers were civil personages, the Minister of War was responsible for the organization of the Army, but was not commander-in-chief, nor in direct charge of the local military units. It was true that the King was technically head of the Army as

well as head of the State, as he had impressed upon the officers gathered at Bussaco a week ago. But he was anything but a soldier in practice, and it did not occur to him to put on his uniform and to endeavour to electrify the battalions near him by inspiring harangues, or to lead them into battle. Indeed the Prime Minister endeavoured to persuade him to leave Lisbon at once, and to get away to Cintra or Mafra, palaces out of the range of the fighting. For he urged, very reasonably, that the guard of the Palace and the King's person was immobilizing a large part of the garrison of Lisbon, who might be wanted at once in the centre of the city. One can only say that it was most unlucky that Dom Manuel had been called back to Lisbon by the visit of the Brazilian President. For he had been intending to make a progress through Northern Portugal, starting on October 4th, through provinces where the name of Lisbon was hated, and local feeling was not Republican. If he had been at Oporto, or any other northern town, on October 3rd, the Lisbon revolutionists, if they had succeeded in the capital, would have had to undertake an invasion of the north, where no one would have adhered to them: they could not have carried the whole country with them.

The King, however, refused to retire at once: he remained in the Necessidades Palace till the afternoon, when the Fleet began to bombard its front. Then he took cover in a garden-house in the Palace park, and, after a stay of a few hours there, went off in a motor, accompanied by three persons only, to the palace of Mafra, twenty miles away, and so was lost to sight. One can only say that if he had been out of Lisbon when the rebellion began, the Prime Minister and the commanders of the troops would have been spared much distracting mental worry. But when once it was



known that he was in Lisbon, his flight from it was most disheartening to his followers, and led them to believe that he despaired of his own cause, and that there was no use in prolonging the struggle.

Meanwhile the Prime Minister and my very polite old friend the Minister of War seem to have been far too optimistic on the morning of October 4th, and to have judged that the rebels on the Rotunda would easily be put down by the loyal forces on the spot. For it appears not to have been till after midday that they began to telegraph orders right and left to all the battalions and batteries in Central Portugal, north and south of the Tagus, to requisition trains and come in to Lisbon with every rifle and gun that could be mobilized. Meanwhile the revolutionists had cut most of the railway lines and many of the cables, and in addition, when the wires were not broken, it would seem that disloyalists in the central telegraph office delayed or mutilated messages. Many Royalist pamphleteers in later days have accused the Prime Minister of deliberate malfeasance, for not having set going the orders for the movement of troops from the provinces even before the revolution broke out, since he had been given warning that it was imminent, and they have hinted that he kept the Minister of War in the dark till the actual news of the outbreak came to hand in the early night hours of the 4th: while the Minister of War is said to have broken down completely under the stress, and to have abandoned himself too early to despair. My own impression is that both became panic-stricken when it became evident, about noon on the 4th, that the insurgents on the Rotunda were not dispersing, as had been hoped earlier in the morning, and that great part of the regiments which had not revolted were untrustworthy. Certainly the general collapse of the

Royalist party on the second day of the troubles was discreditable. And in a few weeks the late ministers, with few exceptions, were not merely keeping quiet, but giving in their adhesion to the republic, which shows that they can hardly have been convinced Monarchists!

Putting aside all charges against the ministers for not having taken adequate precautions before the actual outbreak, and for not having done their best to concentrate the troops from outside Lisbon at the earliest possible hour when the revolt had actually begun, I must remark that whatever faults they may have committed, the disgraceful fall of the monarchy was actually due to the Army. There were enough soldiers in Lisbon at dawn on October 4th to deal with the nucleus of revolutionists at the Rotunda, if only the soldiers were prepared to fight. Unfortunately great numbers of the rank and file were not so prepared. In most of the regiments there were a few officers, a good many non-commissioned officers, and a very considerable proportion of privates who were on the lists of the Republican party as ready to move at the signal. They had not done so on the night of October 3rd, when only the 16th line, the artillery, and the sailors had risen. This, certainly, was due to reasonable doubts as to whether the rebellion would prove successful—these sort of people were not prepared to take excessive risks for the republic. But of course they were much less prepared to take any personal risk at all in behalf of the monarchy, i.e. they intended to shirk if the matter came to fighting, and to watch the course of events. Only this fact can account for the actual details of the miserable fusillade which lasted all day on the 4th—much firing and few dead or wounded. As I have already remarked, the total number of casualties in the alleged

battle was 20 killed and 92 wounded, out of nearly 5,000 men under arms on the monarchist side. And on the next day the regiments dispersed or surrendered.

The admitted facts are somewhat as follows. On getting news of the outbreak and of the massing of the rebels at the Rotunda, the general commanding the Lisbon division—his name was Gorgão—gave orders for the concentration of the two brigades of the garrison, the one round the Palace, to protect the person of the King, the other in the Rocio or central square, which lies a little south of the end of the Avenida, at whose northern end the rebels had fortified themselves. It was soon evident that the Republicans were on the defensive. To discover exactly what they were holding, and if they were on the move, a troop of police-cavalry explored up the great Avenue: it was received with a general discharge of artillery. The rebels had pointed most of their guns down the Avenida, which gave beautiful downhill shooting. Two of the police-cavalry were killed, a number wounded—the rest came galloping back down the Avenida. This was the first gunfire heard on October 4th, but from that hour it became almost incessant—the rebels were aware that there must be a considerable force collected at the bottom of the avenue, and wanted to keep it scared. This they did most effectively: most of their shells went into the hotels and the railway-station at the bottom of the slope, but the brigade collected in the Rocio square could never be induced to move up the hill. They answered with a feeble fire from their battalion machine-guns. There were two battalions of infantry here, and several companies of municipal guards—but they never could be got to advance—and many of their officers showed no wish to lead them out, when orders came to deliver an attack. There must

have been nearly 1,000 Royalist troops of the line in this quarter—their total casualties at the end of the day appear to have been 3 killed and 10 wounded, all by shell-fire. The police lost a few more.

The other brigade of the garrison—three battalions, a cavalry regiment, and some companies of municipal guards—were at the western end of Lisbon, concentrated in front of the Palace, nominally for the protection of the person of the King. They stood on the defensive, skirmishing a little with the revolted sailors from the naval barracks in the suburb of Alcantara. How little serious this fusillade must have been can be gathered from the fact that one battalion (1st of the line) making a front in this direction lost during the whole day two wounded! Later in the morning there arrived at the Palace the horse-battery from the suburban barracks at Queluz, under Captain Paiva Couceiro, the only officer on the Royalist side who showed real energy on this day.

Orders then came from general headquarters that the force by the Palace should detach one battalion of infantry (2nd of the line), the cavalry regiment (2nd Lancers), and the newly arrived battery to march by a long detour through the northern quarters of the town, and turn the rebel position from the rear. When they should have got behind the Rotunda and the artillery barracks, the horse-battery was to shell the barricades and the infantry to storm them. At the same time the other brigade from the Rocio was to attack frontally up the Avenida. Why the cavalry regiment was sent it is hard to see—they could not act offensively against guns and entrenchments, and could at best serve as an escort to Paiva Couceiro's battery. This column was commanded by Colonel Albuquerque of the Lancers. Then followed the only serious attack made on the

rebels this day. Paiva Couceiro got his battery—only four guns—to a position on high ground favourable for playing on the artillery barracks from the rear, somewhere in the ground now called the 'Park of Edward VII' and near the Penitentiary. He was soon answered by three guns from the side of the barracks, but succeeded in silencing them, whereupon the infantry (2nd line) was told to charge. Only one officer and about forty men went forward: the colonel and many more kept under the shelter of a wall. On the repulse of this feeble attack, the battalion disbanded itself, and only about fifty men could be rallied.

Captain Couceiro kept up his fire for nearly an hour more, sending back requisitions for more infantry to the brigadier at the Palace. None came; and as the attack from the Rocio side which was to have synchronized with his had failed to develop, he found himself in a dangerous position, having no support save the cavalry regiment in his rear, which was useless for attacking barricades. He had lost an officer and ten men from his battery, and was running low in ammunition—there had been only 250 shells in his caissons—when a brigadier from the Palace came up and told him to retire, and to join the force at the Rocio by a long circuit: this he and the Lancer regiment did unmolested. As the 2nd line had lost four killed and eight wounded in its abortive attack, it may be said that the one serious effort of the Royalists against the Republican entrenchments had been beaten off with a total casualty list of twenty-three killed and wounded!

The hour was now three o'clock in the afternoon: there was no further close fighting before dark, only a continuation of the artillery fire of the rebel guns down the Avenida, to which was presently added a fire from the ships in the river. Isolated skirmishers on

both sides kept up a harmless fire from behind cover, with much noise but no effect. The result of the day's work from the merely tactical side had been inconclusive: at dusk the rebels were still holding only their barricades at the northern end of the Avenida. But the moral result had been disastrous for the Monarchists—they had failed to crush the rebellion, through the flagrant disloyalty of their rank and file, of whom only a small proportion had made any attempt to fight, and this though they must have outnumbered the rebels, including the armed civilians, by at least three to one. And the King had fled!

Events on the waterside had a good deal to do with the discouragement of the Monarchists on the evening of October 3rd. At about three in the afternoon the revolted vessels of the Fleet had begun to bombard the Palace of Necessidades, and the King had retired to the summer-house at the head of the park. There were still, taking cover behind houses and walls, some 1,200 men under arms around the Palace, even after the detachment which had marched off to attack the Rotunda had departed. After staying an hour or so in the summer-house, King Manuel had gone off in a motor to Mafra, with the high approval of the Prime Minister and the general at headquarters, who both suggested that it would now be possible to utilize the considerable force hitherto detained at the Palace. Orders were therefore sent to the brigadier in command to bring his men to the neighbourhood of the Rocio square, and join the force already collected there. The brigadier, however, reported that this was, in his opinion, impossible: the route through the streets was dangerous, and the troops were tired and would not march if ordered to do so. These pleas were of very doubtful validity: there was a considerable body of

trustworthy officers and men, and the very unimportant operations in which the brigade had been engaged during the day had only produced four casualties! Its non-appearance at the Rocio that night and the next morning was one of the chief causes of the disgraceful surrender on October 5th.

The ships of the rebel fleet meanwhile, after shelling the Palace for some time, and causing its defenders to take cover, moved upstream, and mooring in the river on a level with the great square, where the main body of the Monarchist troops were concentrated, sent some shells into the Ministries of War and Marine, the Customs House, and the narrow streets of the old town. This apparently happened at about 4.30 or 5 o'clock. The descent of these projectiles showed that the region in possession of the Royalists was under fire from the rear, as it was already from the front, since the batteries by the Rotunda were sending their shells into the same district. The sensation of being caught between two fires seems to have demoralized the military chiefs, who were now well aware of the apathy or worse of the majority of their rank and file. They made some attempts to erect barricades on the outer circuit of the streets which they were holding, but only an insignificant number of men—mainly municipal guards—could be induced to man them. Though the loss of life had been trifling, and though the insurgents at the Rotunda had never come out to take the offensive, but contented themselves with lobbing shells into the Royalist position, with no effective result, the general in command and his chief subordinates seem to have lost heart completely. The troops from the Necessidades Palace had never turned up, in spite of repeated orders: no help from the provinces was at hand, so far as could be ascertained. A report that artillery from up the

Tagus was close at hand turned out to be unfounded. As a matter of fact the outlying emissaries of the rebels had cut the railway lines in every direction, and most of the cables. The only troops that could have arrived, if the defence had continued longer, were an artillery brigade, and a battalion escorting it, from Santarem, who had wisely marched by road. But, having fifty miles to cover, they had only got half-way to Lisbon by dark. Their actual position was not known: other and more distant reinforcements were held up by the breaking of the railway lines. The flight of the King, though perfectly justifiable from the military point of view, had a deplorable moral effect. All the faint-hearted declared that Dom Manuel despaired of the State. The Prime Minister, who had stayed at military headquarters all the day and part of the night, went home, after telling the apathetic general in command that he should be dismissed, and the charge given over to the commander of the Military Police, who was to hold out as long as he could—the impression that he left behind seems to have been pessimistic. On his way home he came near a bursting shell, was slightly hit by flying stones, and went to bed. The Minister of War was, it appears, in a state of collapse.

At dawn on October 5th it was seen that the rebel ships on the Tagus had drawn closer in. They resumed their bombardment of the Royalist position from the rear, and presently prepared to throw ashore on the quay below the old town a large landing force, of which armed civilians formed a great part. Before their attack had developed, a white flag was sent out from the Rocio. Its alleged purpose was to propose an hour's suspension of hostilities. The German *chargé d'affaires* had suggested that time should be given to allow his co-nationals, and foreigners generally, to get out of the



line of fire. But this was only a pretext: the fact was that, at a hasty meeting of the generals and the officers commanding units, it had been voted by a majority that further resistance was impossible, owing to the demoralization of the troops. A few votes had been given against it, notably those of the artilleryman Paiva Couceiro and the colonel of the 2nd Lancers, who proposed to call on all loyal officers and men to follow them out of the city, and to make their way to the interior, to join the royal forces in the provinces.

The white flag having once been hoisted, many of the officers went off by themselves, and the disloyal element among the rank and file fraternized with the Republicans, who had disembarked from the ships, or come down from the Rotunda. There was no formal surrender, but rather a general dispersion. The Republic was proclaimed in the central square, and a Provisional Government appeared—at the head of which was not Admiral Reis—for good reasons—but a respectable figure-head, Theophilo Braga, an idealist and a literary man, who was not to endure for long. The considerable body of troops who had been left isolated at the Necessidades Palace returned to their barracks and piled their arms. Some of their officers dispersed—a few hastened to the headquarters to give assurance of their adherence to the republic.

In this disgraceful fashion Lisbon fell into the power of the insurgents. The victors talked a great deal about the heroism displayed by their party: if analysed the heroism consisted in the murder of two or three officers by the mass-violence of their men, and the wounding of four or five more—some in barracks, some on ship-board. Then, on the side of the land-insurgents, of sitting behind barricades for a long day, and loosing off ineffective cannon-shot at a timid enemy, without

any attempt to close with him. On the part of the naval mutineers, of steaming up and down the waterside of a city and plumping shells into a palace or a ministry, there being no counter-fire to be feared. The only person who came out of the business with any credit was Machado Santos, who kept the rebels at the Rotunda from dispersing, when it became clear that the insurrection was only partial and not complete at the moment. And this can only be called negative heroism on the part of a man who was, so to speak, fighting with a rope round his neck—and was anxious not to be left alone by the whole of his co-conspirators. What were the casualties suffered by the insurgents it is impossible to say, since many of them were armed civilians of whom no count was kept. It is safe to conclude, however, that they must have been considerably less than those of the Royalists, since they were fighting under cover all day, and repelling rather than delivering attacks. If they reached fifty I should be much surprised. When Republican heroes came into the limelight after the triumph of their party, there were many who claimed to have been in the streets, but hardly any who could put in the extra merit of having received a wound. I fancy that Admiral Reis was the only officer of the Republican faction who died that day.

As to the Royalist party, it is even more hard to keep down one's sense of disenchantment. Not only was there much mismanagement, but there was more criminal apathy, and a good deal of actual shirking. The pamphleteers of the defeated faction lay much stress on the want of foresight and vigorous preliminary action by the Prime Minister, and on the nervous collapse of the Minister of War. But the one thing that is certain is that even if the ministers were culpably remiss in preparation to resist the revolt, which they

knew was coming, they had on the spot, and ready for action, a sufficient body of troops to suppress the very feeble Republican movement, if only the troops had fought. And we may add that although the rank and file in many units were riddled with seditious propaganda, there was a sufficient nucleus of men who would have followed their officers if their officers had shown resolution. Unfortunately this was the exception rather than the rule. One can understand that poor King Manuel was not an inspiring figure, and that his ministers were looked upon as mere members of the old political gang, whose factious and corrupt intrigues had wearied the nation and the army for many years.

But many officers, in the highest as well as the lower ranks, showed not only lack of initiative, but lack of proper soldierly spirit. They had all taken the military oath of obedience, many of them had been present at the apparently enthusiastic meeting at Bussaco a short week before. If not loyalty, yet *esprit de corps* has, frequently in other armies, kept men to their duty. In too many cases neither of these incentives seems to have operated in the Portuguese Army on October 4, 1910. In the case of the generals we find more or less apposite orders given, but no serious attempt to see them executed. The officer in chief command, General Gorgão, and at least two of his brigadiers, seem to have been both apathetic and pessimistic. They were among the first exponents of the idea of surrender, when once they saw that the orders that they had issued were not being carried out. But the gravest responsibility attached to the regimental officers: they seem, in most cases, to have made no serious attempt to act upon the commands given them. When they were told to take the offensive, they did not attempt to force their men on: it is true that many of the rank and file flinched,

but it was the duty of their superiors to lead on such as would follow, and to endeavour to 'bustle up' the rest, even by the most drastic measures—e.g. shooting the first man who actually disobeyed the word of command. If the officers had exposed themselves, there would have been casualties among them: the absence of the name of any single officer killed among the 3,000 infantry of five battalions of the line and eight companies of military police is sufficiently significant. In the record of the 2nd line, given above, when the battalion was told to advance, we are told that one lieutenant and forty men only went forward. The colonel and other officers, with many men, lurked behind a wall, or went to the rear! If the infantry had made any serious attempt to attack the rebels they would have had some casualties no doubt, but they *must* have swept away the enemy, who cannot have been a third of their numbers, and of whom many were merely armed civilians. The record of the battalions engaged shows casualties of two, four, six, or in one case as many as twelve men hit, without a single officer among them, in corps of 350 or 400 men. As a contrast, we may note that Paiva Couciero's horse-battery, the sole unit which took up a place in the front line and held it for hours, lost two officers and ten men out of a total force of under sixty. Some officers in all corps engaged seem to have tried to do their duty: many threw up their commissions when the Republic triumphed; but the majority did not. Some were mean enough to endeavour to curry favour by sending in representations to the new Government to the effect that, though they had not joined the Republicans, they had co-operated usefully, by ordering their men to fire high, or to take cover instead of advancing! What could be expected in another and a more serious war

of men capable of making such a declaration without any sense of shame?

On the morning of October 5th, therefore, Lisbon had fallen into the hands of the Republicans, and the Provisional Government had been proclaimed. But this did not mean that the whole kingdom had been conquered: there was in quite recent Portuguese history the record of Oporto being held for months against a government which had installed itself at Lisbon—in the old war of Dom Pedro against the usurping Miguel. And in the end the constitutional cause had triumphed. There was every possibility that the same phenomenon might have been seen in 1910, if the Monarchist party had been properly led. For in Lisbon alone was there a preponderant Republican feeling, and the Lisbon garrison was exceptionally untrustworthy—as the ministers and the King were aware. The real tragedy of mismanagement came in the three days following October 4th.

King Manuel, as we have seen, had motored from Lisbon to the Palace of Mafra, with the full approval of his Prime Minister, when the Fleet began to bombard the Necessidades Palace. He had only his Lord Chamberlain, the Conde de Sabugoza, and three other persons with him. He reached Mafra before dusk, and found it almost empty, though a small guard was kept there—the royal servants were left behind at Lisbon, or with the two queens—the Queen-Mother Amelia, and the King's grandmother, Maria Pia, at the far more comfortable Palace of Cintra. The two ladies and their suite joined the King at night, and next morning early there appeared the last remaining member of the royal family, the King's uncle Alfonso, Duke of Oporto. He had been at Cascaes, by the mouth of the Tagus, when the trouble broke out, had got on board the royal

yacht *Amelia*, and had run up the coast to Ericeira, a little harbour, three miles below the high-lying Mafra. Some thought that this prince—a soldier by profession and not an old man—would have done better to have gone to the seat of the fighting, and to have shown himself to the troops. Probably it would have been to little effect.

The telegraph service from Mafra to Lisbon was, by now, in the hands of the rebels: and on the morning of the 5th the royal family could not ascertain what was going on in the capital. The only news brought by the *Amelia* was that things seemed to be unsatisfactory when the Duke of Oporto left the mouth of the Tagus. As a matter of fact, General Gorgão was just making his surrender of the Royalist forces at Lisbon while the anxious members of the royal family were discussing their future plans at Mafra. It was apparently about midday that a loyal partisan motored up to the Palace, to say that everything had gone as badly as possible, and that the King must move without delay out of the neighbourhood of the capital.

The natural course was to utilize the royal yacht, whose appearance seemed providential, and to make for Oporto, only half a day's steam. To go by motor along the coast road by Coimbra would take a much longer time, and it was possible that there might be trouble on the way. The Republican emissaries, who had been cutting telegraph and railway lines, might stop a small party, without escort, travelling in a few motors. There were not more than four or five cars available. The King at once declared his intention of going to Oporto, putting himself at the head of the garrison there, and gathering together all the troops in the north for a march on Lisbon. This was the obvious and only rational plan. He might have been at Oporto by mid-

night, before the news of the disaster at Lisbon came to hand there, since all telegraphic communication was known to be cut. Early in the afternoon the four members of the royal party motored down to Ericeira and went on board the *Amelia*, accompanied by six or eight members of their household. Coal and provisions were short, as the yacht had put to sea without any preparation on the previous night. But a few hours' steaming would take it to the mouth of the Douro.

In order to get out of the way of any Republican warships which might have taken up a pursuit, the *Amelia* ran some way into the Atlantic out of sight of the coast. This lost some hours, and was not a very necessary precaution, since the commanders of the rebel navy were thinking of little else than of celebrating their easy victory. But in the Atlantic a most unfortunate council was held between the royal family, their suite, and the officers of the yacht. No information, it must be remembered, was forthcoming as to what might have happened in the north: it was conceivable that there had been trouble at Oporto also, or that the rebel fleet might be waiting off the mouth of the Douro to intercept the yacht. All sorts of pessimistic ideas were brought forward. It is said that the captain of the little vessel was the person who broached the theory that the safest course was to turn south, far out at sea, and make for Gibraltar, a direction in which no pursuit was likely. After hours of talk this most unhappy suggestion was finally accepted: the King, it is said, though in a state of great depression, argued for some time in favour of taking the risk and making for Oporto, but did not persist. It should be remembered that he had suffered a horrible disillusionment at the conduct of the troops in Lisbon, on whom his ministers had told him to rely, and that he had come

from a bombardment, and spent a sleepless night of alarms.

So the *Amelia* turned southward, and reached Gibraltar on the 7th, with her coal almost exhausted. Not a single vessel had been spoken with on the way. The British Governor was startled to find a whole royal family thrown on his hands, half starved and without any baggage. He telegraphed to London for orders giving him the course he was to pursue, and meanwhile more time was lost.

This was the end of the possibility of saving the Portuguese monarchy. The King had disappeared for three days—no one in the north knew what had happened to him since he reached Mafra on the afternoon of October 4th. If there had been at Oporto men prepared to shut their eyes to everything except their duty, to defend the régime which had placed them in authority, it would have been easy to send a defiance to Lisbon, and to wait till the whereabouts of the King should be discovered. Unfortunately the only news forthcoming was that Dom Manuel had put to sea for an unknown destination, apparently abandoning his realm, since otherwise he must already have reached Oporto. After three days of waiting, during which they were inundated with tendentious telegrams from the Provisional Government at Lisbon, and were indoctrinated with the idea that their King had abandoned them, and fled to Spain or England in despair, the authorities, civil and military, in the northern provinces gave way to pessimism, and sent in their submission to the Republican Government. They must not be blamed too severely, as the King's flight to Gibraltar was an absolutely disheartening blow. If he had been intending to fight, the way to the north had been perfectly open to him.



The victorious Republicans at Lisbon celebrated their triumph, as might have been expected, by riots in which monasteries were sacked, a few clerics murdered, and much damage done to private property. But there was no great severity used to the partisans of the late Government, who indeed had deserved well of their successors by their blind and feeble mismanagement of affairs. Only a few were arrested for a time, including João Franco, the dictator of the days of King Carlos; they were then sent to their homes, or allowed to leave the country. A large proportion of the officers of the Army resigned their commissions—others who had not done so were cashiered. Then arose the problem of solving the question as to how the spoils should be divided among the victors. Hundreds of Republican sergeants received officers' commissions: thousands of Republican civilians were taken into the Government service. It is said that the ministries were so overmanned by the newcomers that individuals were only required to put in an appearance for two days a week!

I need go no farther with this narrative. The Monarchical Government had been corrupt, extravagant, and nepotistic. The Republican Government proved much more so. The milreis when I was in Portugal in 1910 was a large silver coin, the size of a five-franc piece. The 'rey' part of its name proved irritating to Republican susceptibilities, and an 'escudo' took its place. The paper escudo of to-day is now 110 to the English pound, i.e. is worth 2d. Fifteen years of kaleidoscopic ministries, varied by *pronunciamientos* in the Army, finally ended in a military dictatorship, which exists to-day, and has decidedly improved the state of affairs. For the last year or two life and property have been perceptibly safer, than when the Republican régime was functioning in its normal fecklessness.

King Manuel settled down very quietly in England: I saw him several times, took him round the Bodleian once, and to see the Eights from the New College barge on another occasion. He never tried to set foot in Portugal again, but his adherents made two successive attempts to raise the north country against the Republic. The artilleryman Couceiro, who had taken such a gallant part in the Lisbon *débâcle*, led two invasions from the north in September 1911 and July 1912, at the head of a few hundred resolute Monarchists, mostly ex-military officers. The peasantry never rose as had been hoped, and the whole raiding band never reached a thousand rifles. The country-side was not hostile, but apathetic, fearing sharp punishment if the Royalists failed. And after many marches and counter-marches Couceiro was on each occasion obliged to take refuge behind the Spanish frontier. The Republicans were therefore able to continue their faction fights and assassinations without fear of a reaction. In one of them Machado Santos, the hero of October 4, 1910, was shot while stirring up an objectless rising. Such events were normal, and 'the Revolution devoured her children' as in the France of 1794, till a military dictator—also as in France—supervened.

Dom Manuel lived twenty years at Richmond, married a wife (by whom he had, however, no issue), and devoted himself to good works, art collecting, and the writing of a vast two-volume compilation on the history of early printed books in Portugal. He was a familiar and well-liked figure in Surrey, and died only last year, still quite young, not much over forty years of age. His magnificent will gave his collections and a large sum of money to the country which had treated him so ungraciously. Probably he was right in deciding that he was not of the stuff from which successful kings

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are made. But Portugal has certainly had bitter experience of the effects of displacing a traditional monarchy—even one in its old age—by a Government of *arrivistes* and adventurers. What will come after the death of the present rather successful military dictator who can say? Dom Manuel left no heirs, and his distant cousins, who descend from the absolutist pretender of 1830, Dom Miguel, are very obscure personages, though resolute Royalists still bear their existence in mind.

## CHAPTER X

### SOME GLIMPSES OF WHITEHALL DURING THE GREAT WAR

1914-1918

IT may perhaps seem presumptuous for one who was fifty-four when the Great War broke out, and who never came under hostile fire save when Zeppelins and other aircraft troubled London, to put on record any experiences of those four dreadful years 1914-1918. I have read sufficient books written by those who endured the trenches of the Somme, or the mud and blood of Passchendaele, or the heat and cold of Gallipoli, to make me feel somewhat chary of describing mere mental worries in Whitehall. There may be some who went through a part of those awful experiences who feel that it is almost sacrilege for a civilian to mention the War at all. Nevertheless, since a whole generation has now grown up to whom the War is but a memory of childhood, and who hardly realize what it looked like, when at last it did come, to those who had been half-expecting it for some years, I have ventured to make some notes as to curious happenings in Whitehall, among those who found themselves involved in some small measure of responsibility. Whitehall was pretty smartly criticized for the whole period of the War, and could not for patriotic reasons retaliate upon the military and naval experts. I fancy that history will some day sort out the responsibilities. But

that is not my business to-day: I have only in mind the recording of certain personal reminiscences.

When I went on holiday to Scotland in the middle of July 1914, the horrible business of the murder of Archduke Franz Ferdinand on June 28th was some weeks in the past: there had been no immediate explosion—one remembers that a month elapsed before Austria suddenly flared out with that declaration of war on Serbia at forty-eight hours' notice which set fire to the gunpowder on July 25th. This was not the first time on which there had been a danger of the outbreak of that World War of which political prophets had been talking for the last ten years. There had been so much crying of 'Wolf', that, like the villagers in the fable of *Æsop*, we were mostly taken unawares when the 'wolf' did at last come. I must confess that I had been under the impression that some terms would be found by which Austria would get moral satisfaction, and Russia not be provoked to intervention. However, things went fast in the fatal ten days between Austria's ultimatum to Serbia on July 25th, and Great Britain's declaration of war on Germany on August 4th, after the violation of Belgian neutrality.

We were suddenly involved in a struggle extending over the whole continent of Europe, such a thing as had not been seen since our contest with Napoleon a full hundred years back. It is curious to remark that just one century elapsed between the fall of Paris and the abdication of Napoleon at Fontainebleau in 1814 and the outbreak of the next pan-European war in 1914. This was an appalling fact to master—there was nothing, or at least little, to be learned by thinking over the Crimea, or the Indian Mutiny, or the South African War of 1900. Everything was suddenly at stake—just as it had been in 1814: once more the future

of the Empire was in question, and (as in the old Napoleonic days) there was going to be a naval as well as a military problem: a thing unknown since Trafalgar. For we well knew of the growing numbers and the efficiency of the new German fleet—though we had no notion of the proportions that the submarine question was going to assume within the next few months.

On August 4th, when Bethmann-Hollweg had his fatal conversation with Sir Edward Goschen, and the famous phrase about the 'Scrap of Paper' cropped up, I was with my whole family at Pitlochry, keeping an eye on happenings at Berlin only through the *Scotsman*, and *The Times* which always came a day late. The news of the declaration of war was a shock, but the terrible rapidity with which it developed was the thing which upset all one's hypotheses as to what a pan-European war was to be like. Everyone interested in Continental affairs knew of Brialmont's great system of armoured fortresses, which were supposed to cover Belgium, and of the Verdun-Toul-Belfort fortified areas that guarded the French frontier on the east. We had expected complicated clashes all along the Western Front, which might last for weeks before any decisive break-through might be made. Instead of that came absolute disaster—the fall of the Liège forts after only four days' bombardment by such heavy artillery as had never been seen in war before—the complete defeat of the central French armies at Morhange and in the fighting in the Ardennes, the over-running of all Belgium by the German right wing's great outflanking movement. The numbers displayed by the enemy dismayed the Allies—the French staff had miscalculated the strength which the enemy could put in upon the Western Front during the first weeks of the War by something like fifteen army corps.



The British observer had looked upon all this as a bad start for the Allied cause, but had little notion that the trouble was only beginning. When the French should have shifted troops north-westward, when the British expeditionary corps should have come into line, it was believed that the German rush would be stayed. Instead, there followed continued disaster—the fall of the strong forts of Namur, reckoned as invulnerable as Liège, after only three days' bombardment, the complete defeat of the French left wing army at Charleroi, and the enforced retreat of the British, who escaped envelopment by the outflanking German corps only by hard fighting at Mons (August 23rd), and harder at Le Cateau (August 26th). It was the news of the long retreat southward after Le Cateau, with no signs of there being any chance of making a stand, for eleven days (August 27th–September 6th), and with the fall of Paris seeming more probable as each night fell, that caused a wave of dreadful dismay to spread across Great Britain. We had thrown in our admirable expeditionary force, and it seemed to have been too small to count for much, in the clash of millions that was now going on all across Northern France.

It was the sudden realization that everything was now at stake, and that not only the young but the elderly must now do their bit—relieving men of military age if they could do nothing else—that compelled me to write on September 4th to my friend, Sir John Simon—then Home Secretary in the Asquith Government—to ask if I could be of any use in Whitehall or elsewhere. There might be some place in the general reconstruction of official work in which five languages, some knowledge of history and geography, and some acquaintance with German military matters could prove useful. I got at once a telegram telling me

to report in Whitehall to F. E. Smith (the Birkenhead that was to be) for special duty. By the night of September 6th I found myself installed with a most heterogeneous collection of colleagues in a rather rickety building beside the Admiralty, at the head of Whitehall, where a bank now stands.

F. E. explained to me that he had been put in charge of a new institution, which had only just come into existence, and which would have most miscellaneous duties. It was called—a name invented on the spur of the moment—the 'Press Bureau': but this title gives a very inadequate idea of its scope. In a few months it shed off several side-departments, some of which had nothing to do with the Press at all, and for nearly two years I was at work on one of these—that which took charge of the registering of German casualties.

But at first the institution found itself set to any and every sort of duty. Its joint chiefs were Sir Edward Cook—an old Winchester schoolfellow of my own, who knew all about journalists, as he had for many years edited the *Pall Mall Gazette*—and Sir Frank Swettenham, a returned colonial governor with a broad knowledge of the Eastern lands. The small staff when the Bureau started consisted of a few 'dug-outs', naval and military, colonels and captains R.N. well on in the sixties, a literary man or two, and some specialists from the British Museum, who were travelled men with many languages, who had seen the cities of men.

The first duty that the Bureau had to take in hand was to impress on the newspapers that nothing must be printed which might give the enemy the slightest item of useful knowledge. This was soon found to involve the suppression of the old-fashioned 'Special Correspondent'—a task of which the Japanese had set us the example during their recent war with Russia.

This brought down on us an enormous volume of abuse from talented journalists, who had taken the field in former campaigns, and wanted to be let loose in France. Already during the first days of the War some very mischievous work had been done by daring amateurs, who had got to the front without leave, and divulged things that had better have been hidden. Before the War was two months old there was but one special correspondent working, and he an official one, the celebrated 'Eyewitness', who was no less a person than our present professor of Military History at Oxford, Sir Ernest Swinton. His special task was not only to write stuff that would interest the public, without divulging anything that could be of use to the enemy, but also to introduce material which, while keeping within the bounds of veracity, might yet lure the German reader to erroneous deductions. And well he discharged his task—though his comrades at the front smiled at his efforts, knowing what they did about the condition of affairs, and not realizing the benefit of stressing some facts and camouflaging others.

The sort of stuff which the English newspapers had been printing in those early days, before the censorship got to work, surprises me when I read it in cold blood eighteen years after. But how hard it was to convince editors that 'scoops' may be good for circulation, but perhaps noxious to the common weal. And how stormy were the interviews with would-be special correspondents—especially the Americans, who looked upon the whole War, at that time, as a first-rate show, in which they were not personally concerned, save in the way of getting thrills for their respective journals. Sir Edward Cook, our chief, was invaluable in dealing with such folk—as an editor of a newspaper for many years, he could speak with authority to newspaper men.

But the Press Bureau was concerned not merely with seeing what should *not* be published, but in providing what *should* be published. At the beginning of the War there was no regular system of *communiqués* from the front—the very rare dispatches of Sir John French appeared at long intervals, and reprints of what the French Government issued as official news. These scraps were often decidedly deceptive, both from what they said and from what they did not say. It was difficult to construct from them a general view of what was going on at the front. And this result was probably desired by the French Government, when things were faring so badly as they were in August 1914.

My own reminiscences of this time of makeshift devices centre round Saturday, September 12th. We had been drawing up a regular plan for the working of official *communiqués*—present the Home Secretary, Sir E. Cook, the editors of the *Telegraph* and *Daily News*—and that evening I was put to the really responsible task of drawing up the official narrative of the Battle of the Marne. We had been getting in scraps of information, English and French, for four days, ever since the Allied armies had turned on their heels from the long retreat, and assumed the offensive again. But what exactly had happened in the general result had to be formulated. Harold Smith, the brother of the great F. E. and his constant lieutenant, came into me and threw down the whole pile of deciphered telegrams of the 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th September, and said 'it looks like a victory—put all that together, and see what you can make of it'. So I drew up the official *communiqué* that was published on the night of the 12th, and which went all round the world, giving a concise narrative of the events of the last four days along the whole front, from Manoury's army on the

left to Foch's on the right, with the satisfactory conclusion that the Allies had gone forward forty miles, and that the Germans were in full retreat for the Aisne, after heavy losses. This I had to do with the awful feeling upon me that if I had got the summary wrong in any serious measure, and if the triumphant advance of the Allies had been misrepresented, the moral effect would be dreadful, the Press Bureau disgraced, and I myself condemned as an incompetent, who had put out false news. I should never have pardoned myself. Fortunately the *communiqué* was all right—the Germans *had* been turned back, and from our point of view the first deplorable act of the great drama had come to an end. The impression of German invincibility had been destroyed, and if the deadlock on the Aisne and the commencement of trench-warfare were a disappointment—we had hoped too soon that we had got the enemy on the run—the feeling of awful depression, and of doubts of ultimate victory, which had obsessed us for the last month was removed.

It would be out of place to go into details of daily life in Whitehall for the four years and a half during which I abode there in one lodgment or another, busy on my various tasks—censoring, propaganda, the drawing up of reports for the War Council, and, for the last two years, Foreign Office work. But two or three incidents stand out in memory very clearly. In 1915–1916 I was in charge of a body of clerks, who kept the tally of German casualties as they came in week by week—a most complicated and never-ending business. We operated by aid of the German official lists, which were procured for us surreptitiously by an ingenious Dutchman, whose sendings never failed to come to hand. Not even the submarine activities stopped them—our file was complete, and is still lying up as a

memorial in the National War Museum. One day I had received a bundle rather larger than usual, and was unfastening it for a preliminary inspection, before sending it on to be dealt with by the clerical staff. Folded up in the middle of the bundle there was an envelope, which fell out on the table. Picking it up, I saw, to my amazement, that it was directed in German to the *Kommandatur* at Essen. When I opened it I found that it was full of clippings from the last ten days of the London newspapers which specialize on shipping and trade, with a covering letter to the effect that 'some of these may be useful'. It was obvious that our Dutch friend was a double-spy, and that while he was sending us German casualties, he was sending the Germans notes on our mercantile marine, possibly valuable for submarine commanders. By some astounding piece of carelessness his sendings had got mixed.

I ran to my telephone and rung up the omniscient Admiral over the way, who was the specialist in charge of spy-matter connected with naval things. I hurriedly explained to him that I had found, in the middle of 'Vandenbosch's' usual sending, a quantity of shipping information addressed to the Germans, and asked him what he would do—I supposed it meant complete discarding of this double-faced traitor. 'Not necessarily,' replied the Admiral, 'send over the clippings.' I did so, and was told two hours later that they were absolutely useless, and had been for the most part passed as harmless by the naval censors. But there were three or four which were badly worded, and he asked me to call up the editors of several papers and to warn them to discontinue certain practices. As to breaking off with 'Vandenbosch', he repudiated the idea—the man was sending us really valuable stuff, very regularly, while he was apparently sending the Germans rubbish—

the shipping papers were well looked after. An eye should be kept on him by the counter-espionage people for the future, and by our agents in Holland.

In obedience to the Admiral's orders I rang up the three newspapers which he had named, and got into talk with the editors of two of them, who promised to make the changes suggested. I could not get into touch with the third editor, whose paper was a weekly. He had gone away and there were only underlings left in his office: I asked that he should ring me up next day.

Other business happened to be rather engrossing that night and the following morning, and I was busy in writing a report against time, when my telephone bell began to be vociferous. I switched off my attention from the report, and asked who was speaking. The reply was astounding—it was simply in a clear sweet voice—

I am the Syren in Leaden Hall.

Now this scanned as a line of poetry; it suggested to me a Greek lady in sketchy apparel, seated on a wall by the sea, and singing to ensnare unwary sailormen. But as an introduction to a war-time conversation it seemed inappropriate, not to say insane. I must have answered in a burst of amazement, possibly in unparliamentary language, but certainly asking for an explanation: for I could not think why a Syren should be sitting in Leaden Hall, and wishing to communicate with me of all people.

It was not till I had got the second reply to my query that I made out what was happening. The voice explained that it was that of the confidential private secretary of the editor of the shipping journal called the *Syren*, whose office was at 44, Leadenhall, E.C. Now this was the newspaper with which I had tried

vainly to get into communication on the previous afternoon: but the word Syren, coming unexpectedly, had not suggested a modern periodical to me, but an ancient mythological character. And in the press of other work I had completely forgotten the fact that fifteen hours before I had been trying to pass on a warning from the Admiralty to this quarter. We soon got to comprehensible conversation, and I was informed that the editor would be speaking in a moment—which he did, and duly acknowledged the hint from the Admiralty as to the advisability of a certain modification. On the other hand, I could tell him that there had been no real harm in the clipping to which his attention was drawn. And so much for the mysterious classical lady.

This is a ludicrous, but not unpleasant memory. Far otherwise there comes back to me the impression of the morning of June 2, 1916, which was, with one possible exception, the most trying period of hours on record during the whole War. The naval battle which we call Jutland and the Germans Hornsriff had been fought on May 31st, with results that were unsatisfactory in detail, but not in the general strategic result. That is to say, the German High Seas Fleet had come out on the long-predicted sally into the open, it had inflicted very heavy losses on the detached British squadrons which first discovered and tackled it, but it had retired hastily to its fortified base when Admiral Jellicoe came up with the full force of our capital ships. Indeed, the Admiral's main body had practically not been in action, and the enemy had retired at the first indication of its appearance. That the Germans got away with losses decidedly smaller than those which they had inflicted on our detached squadrons, early in the day, was a misfortune. After much controversy between naval



specialists, it looks as if there had been unfortunate delays in the reporting of the position of the evasive Germans during the night after the battle, and that Admiral Jellicoe had not been kept properly informed by all those who might have given him the important pieces of information. But though this was a disappointment, the main fact remained that the Germans had fled, after suffering considerable loss, had retired to their harbours, and did not come out for some months.

There was really nothing in these happenings to justify the wave of dismay which swept over London on June 2nd, owing to two circumstances, which combined to make us believe that the Fleet had suffered casualties of the most crushing kind, and that the command of the sea had been lost. The first was the German *communiqué* dated as from the night of June 1st, when their ships had got back to harbour, which recapitulated the British losses, minimized their own, and made a sort of claim to victory. The second was Admiral Jellicoe's long and disquieting silence: the battle had been on May 31st—we heard nothing from him at all on June 1st, and it was not till the afternoon of June 2nd that we got a *communiqué* with the crucial fact that the Germans had returned to their harbours badly battered, and that we were still in command of the North Sea. This report acknowledged the heavy losses that we had suffered, and had little of the tone of victory in it, though it showed that we had not suffered a defeat.

Now the German version of the battle got to us at dawn on June 2nd, many hours before our version, and it ran all around the world. It was twisted in many places into the announcement of a German victory and a British defeat. All through the morning of June 2nd the pressmen assembled on the ground floor of the Press

Bureau were getting more and more excited, as they waited for a wire from Jellicoe contradicting the German claims. No such report was received, and all through the morning and noon hours there was growing doubt and dismay among the nervous pressmen. They quite expected to hear the German report confirmed, and grew more and more alarmed as no message came to hand. After some hours of anxious waiting, they began to suspect that things had gone very badly indeed, that disastrous news had arrived and were being kept back. They surged up the stairs and began demanding the latest telegram from the Admiralty—however bad its news. It was criminal, they said, to conceal the tale of disaster, and that a disaster must have occurred could be deduced from the disheartening fact that no message was being given out from the Admiralty. If Jellicoe was still in command of the sea, he must have sent in a report of some sort, even if he had to acknowledge (as the Germans were claiming) some heavy losses. It was in vain that the directors of the Bureau kept repeating that they were keeping nothing back—that the Admiralty had sent us no more news, and that therefore there was nothing to divulge. The stress of feeling lasted on well into the afternoon, when at last information came in, showing that the British Fleet was at sea, and the German Fleet back in its harbour fortresses. I learnt afterwards, on authority which could not have been better or more first-hand, that the whole panic came from the Admiral's conscientious desire to send in full and accurate information, even if it came rather late. He had not realized the effect at home of his long silence, coming on top of the exaggerated German reports. And while he was collecting facts London was almost distraught—or at least our pressmen were—and they were putting about orally their worst

suspensions, which went everywhere, though they did not get printed. It was several days before we came to understand what had really happened, viz., that the Grand Fleet had hardly made its appearance before the Germans sheered off, and escaped by luck combined with good seamanship, and certain defects in reporting on the part of British vessels, who had sighted them in retreat during the night, and failed to report their exact position to Admiral Jellicoe.

The bad effect of the first incomplete news was much lessened by the discovery that the Germans had suppressed the worst of their own losses in their original *communiqué*. When they owned up to them, five or six days later, the general impression all over the world was that the whole of their report had been mere fiction—which was not the fact, as we had suffered dreadfully before Jellicoe's Fleet came upon the scene, and the list of big cruisers destroyed was appalling. Our total loss in lives was about double that of the Germans—but the thing that mattered was that the enemy had fled, and made no attempt to get command of the North Sea. The morning and noon of June 2nd were certainly to me the most distressing moments in the whole War. There was a bad time, certainly, two years later, in March 1918, when the Germans nearly got into Amiens. But even if they had, the news would not have been so appalling as that of the defeat of the main British Fleet, and the loss of our command of the sea, which seemed a possibility at noon on June 2nd. We should have been starved out in six weeks.

This same month of June 1916 was full of other distractions—it saw the sad death of Lord Kitchener, drowned off the Orkneys as he started for Russia—which he might have saved, perhaps, from anarchy. It saw the mustering of the British armies for the first

bloody day of the Somme battle on July 1st. Of these happenings I was but a hearer, but there was one unique event during the last week of June of which I was an interested spectator.

This was the trial of Sir Roger Casement for high treason at the Law Courts on June 27th-28th. I was one of the very few witnesses of this grim business, from which the public was excluded—there were not more than forty persons in the court. For long hours I watched the swarthy, sinister, yet not ill-favoured man in the dock, in his neat grey morning-suit, following every word of the pleadings with an interested ear; generally sitting motionless with his beard clasped in his hand.

There had been no parallel to this trial since in February 1803 Colonel Edward Marcus Despard, late Governor of British Honduras, had been arraigned for plotting the death of George III and the seizure of the Tower, the Bank, and the Houses of Parliament at the head of a Jacobin mob with a nucleus of mutinous soldiers. Here once more was, on trial for his life, a man who had for a quarter of a century been in the service of the Crown, and had held a high official post. Casement differed from Despard only by having received Knighthood of St. Michael and St. George. Yet he had betrayed the king whose honours he had accepted but two years back, continued to draw his pension while he was already intriguing with the public enemy, and endeavoured to seduce poor half-starved soldiers in German prison-camps to break their military oath.

As those who are acquainted with the whole story are well aware, Casement's plunge into treason was not the result of a sudden access of Irish patriotism, but of the way in which he had left the service of the Crown

in sudden disgrace, though without any ostensible cause. And this is the reason why Irish Nationalist orators and writers never mention the name of Casement among the list of those whom they call 'martyrs'. It was reserved for Germans and Americans, ignorant of his story, to fit him with a halo.

Casement, as all will remember, had been arrested at the moment on which he was landed on the coast of Kerry from a German submarine, with one single companion. On the same day a ship laden with 10,000 rifles was intercepted and sunk off the same corner of Ireland, so that the German attempt to utilize him had failed completely. There was really no defence of him possible, but a fluent and wordy Irish lawyer, his leading counsel, tried to raise the preposterous legal plea that High Treason could not be committed abroad, but only in the United Kingdom. He quoted—an astounding defence—some precedents about certain knights in the reign of Edward III who had betrayed a castle in Normandy to the French and were said to be properly liable to trial in the King's courts in France, not in England—Edward at that time claiming to be the lawful King of France. This doctrine of high treason not being committable abroad, was, I believe, completely exploded by Sir Matthew Hale in Stuart times. Yet it was resuscitated with great verbosity in June 1916.

But beside Casement's bargain with the Germans abroad, there was the fact of his landing in Ireland, with treasonable documents upon him, and armed. On a table in the centre of the court were three bags, one tin box, some rusty rifles and pistols, and heaps of soaked papers. Successive policemen had a rummage through the pile, and identified what they had discovered in each receptacle. The farmer on whose land

the disembarkation had taken place had found his children playing with three rather rusty, but fully loaded, revolvers!

If the trial had not been a matter of life and death, I should have been able to get some justifiable amusement out of the cross-examination of the Irish witnesses of the landing by the defendant's fluent counsel. There was a point at which the hiding by Casement of a German cipher-code was being proved: the witness who had seen its concealment was a little boy of twelve, very alert and intelligent. 'Why does the prosecution', said the counsel, 'try to prove the connection of my client with this cipher-code by means of a very small boy. I see in their story that this Martin Collins was accompanied by Thomas Doolan. Why is not the latter produced rather than this child?' 'Because', piped the little Martin in the witness-box, 'Tommy Doolan is only *eight*'. Collapse—for the moment only—of the learned counsel. On another occasion he made an impassioned appeal to a stalwart member of the Royal Irish Constabulary, asking whether he did not feel ashamed to be trying to implicate this noble and patriotic gentleman in a charge of treason, when he was doing his best for Ireland? The only answer of the constable (in a very strong brogue) was 'O'im from Ulster'. The appeal had missed its mark. At another moment of the trial a very queer old farmer, charged to explain his presence on the shore at a very early hour, volunteered the splendid piece of folk-lore that he had gone to pray at the Holy Well of St. Brandan's Thorn for half an hour at daybreak on Good Friday, which would bring him luck for a year! Apparently the superstition really did exist, and the farmer was not on the spot by agreement to receive and guide Casement at his landing, as some had suspected.

The three judges who tried the case sat for the most part very silent and still—Lord Reading in the centre, looking something like a raven, with a big rosy colleague on his left, and a little wizened one on his right. One felt that they were all three viewing with surprise the histrionic efforts of the voluble counsel for the defence: I noted one looking at the ceiling, and tapping with his pencil on the bench, with an expression of complete boredom.

There could be but one end to the trial—a sufficiently grim one.

Five months after the Casement trial my main duty of keeping the tally of German casualties came to a sudden end on December 6, 1916. The reason was that the German Government stopped issuing regimental lists altogether, so that it was no longer possible to allocate the losses to the different areas of the World War, and specially to calculate how the troops opposed to the British Army were faring. The obvious reason for this was that the enemy's losses on the Somme were growing so enormous that he no longer wished to acknowledge them, owing to the moral effect that they were producing in Germany. On December 6th we had counted up to 424,956 from the infantry alone, and there were still vast quantities of figures to come. For the publication of German casualties were now being kept back not only for weeks, but for months: by December all reports were five weeks old, and great numbers of regiments, which we knew to be in the front line, had sent in nothing since October. What the total would have been, had we been able to add in every item, will never be known. The German official *Reichsarchiv* now says that the sum was only 436,651 in all: but, as the editors of the *British Official History of the War* have pointed out, the German system of

counting wounded was somewhat different from ours, and gives a minimum calculation.

There being no more German casualty lists to work upon, my main duty of 1915-1916 ceased at the end of the latter year, and I was transferred to the Foreign Office, just across the way, where I was turned on to a quite different sort of work for the next two years. It was not so exciting, I may confess, as calculating the weekly German losses, and reporting them to the War Council, nor even as censoring out the indiscretions of diarists and biographers, whose books were beginning to appear in some quantity by 1916, nor even as translating captured German documents. The Foreign Office work was mainly making *précis* of negotiations with various Allies, boiling down into narrative long interchanges of letters and proposals. I was largely specializing on the Yugoslavs, with whose charming old minister in London, Jovanovitch, and his staff I had a great deal to do. I had also some touch with the Poles, who even at the worst crises of the war were a most hopeful tribe, and were always cutting up the hide of the bear before the bear was dead. However, they were justified in their activities in the end, and the hypothetical maps of the new frontiers of Poland which I was set to draw, turned out to be useful on some long stretches of frontier. I find that from the first the Poles were asking for, and being conceded, the so-called 'Corridor' to the sea, which cuts off Danzig and East Prussia from the bulk of the German *Reich*. Ethnologically the demand for the 'Corridor' was sound, and could not possibly be refused.

My *précis*-writing and map-making at the Foreign Office were liable to sudden interruptions from air raids; at the news of hostile aircraft over London the whole of the inhabitants of the office retired to our



special bomb-proof, in the cellars, where we found a curious assembly, from the porter's baby up to dignified statesmen. The long waits were boring to a degree: we spent them largely in speculating whether bombs of the very largest size might not find us out. However, as a matter of fact, none fell nearer to us than Cleopatra's Needle and the Charing Cross Hospital on one side, and the neighbourhood of Victoria Station on the other. Our cynics explained the immunity of Whitehall by the hypothesis that our highest authorities were conducting the War in a fashion so satisfactory to the Germans, that their airmen had been warned that anyone would be shot on his return who should bomb the War Office, the Admiralty, or the Foreign Office. This was wholly unfair—the Germans were really far from despising or underrating our direction, though their official publications long continued to hint that our inefficiency was even greater than the Machiavellian cunning which we tried to employ. It used to provoke me quite unreasonably when I so often saw our respected Chancellor of the University represented as a sort of Mephistopheles—a conception of Lord Grey of Fallodon which was absolutely vexatious to anyone who knows him personally.

All through 1918, that year of well-justified alarms followed by still better justified hopes, I was working hard at the Foreign Office. The change of mentality that followed our first great successful push in front of Amiens on August 8th—which Ludendorff called the 'Black day for Germany'—is well marked in my memory. Remembering the disappointments on the Somme, at Passchendaele, and at Cambrai, one had feared at first that this obvious and spectacular success of the 'tanks' would be followed by some new deadlock and stabilization of the front. But the progress, this

time, was continuous: every few days we got news of more ground gained and more Germans taken prisoner: they totalled up to 250,000 or so by the end of October. Nevertheless, we had visions of a long stand on the Meuse, and then a final stand on the Rhine in 1919, which would have to be dealt with. The complete breakdown of German confidence, both in the interior and in the front line, came as somewhat of a surprise to us, while we were calculating how the recently arrived million of Americans would be utilized for the last stage of the War—the spring campaign of 1919 that was never to be fought.

I found myself, as the autumn of 1918 wore on, more occupied with the future than the past: reports as to the possibility of reconstructed boundaries in every part of the world were more frequently required from me, than *précis* of what had been happening between ourselves and our Allies in 1914 or 1915. But this was still all hypothesis—the end of the War was in sight, but had not yet come: it might still be many months ahead. All the more astounding, then, was the German collapse of November, which turned so many hypotheses into actualities of present and real importance.

In October 1918 I was still far from suspecting that in March 1919 I should be in conquered Germany, making notes, that might be useful, about the conditions physical, moral, and mental, of a nation that had fallen into despair and given up the game. There were many curious and unexpected impressions to be collected when my two years in the sedentary work of the Foreign Office were suddenly varied by three weeks on the Rhine, an unexpected election to a seat in Parliament, and in the summer by an official *entente* visit to the French universities.

## CHAPTER XI

### A GLIMPSE OF GERMANY AFTER THE ARMISTICE MARCH AND APRIL 1919

THE Great War came to a sudden end on November 11, 1918. We had been expecting it to drag on for some months more, as I have already observed, since our military friends had been explaining to us that the Germans, beaten as they were, had still the power to retire behind the Rhine and make their last fight in the spring on their own ground, in the hope not of victory, but of securing somewhat better terms from the triumphant but exhausted Allies. They had not gauged the depth of demoralization into which the German nation had sunk, or realized that though the enemy's rear-guard was still making some sort of a defence, the will to fight on was dead in many quarters, and the half-starved civil population was crying out for peace at any price. Hence the general collapse, the revolution in Berlin, and the very tame retreat of the Emperor to Holland, took most of us by surprise. The crash was much more sudden than we had expected. Ignorant of things internal in Germany, we had half believed that the fleet would make a last sudden sally, and probably sink with colours flying, after having inflicted enormous losses on our own Navy. And many thought that William himself might make a similar *Todtenritt* and try to get killed handsomely, at the head of his Guard Corps. Both ideas, as we now know,

had for a moment flashed through German brains—but the end was not to be heroic or dramatic. The ships were not to perish valiantly on the high seas, but to rust in Scapa Flow, and finally to go down to its depths when their existence had been half forgotten. The Kaiser was to settle down to tree-felling and memoir-writing at Doorn, till he, too, passed out of the memory of those interested in the things of every day. It is curious to find, from a perusal of his occasional effusions, that (like the Bourbons of 1814) he has 'forgotten nothing and remembered nothing'. The repetition of his conviction that he has always been the blameless victim of the malevolence of others, remains as unconvincing as ever.

Personally I had expected that the Armistice would soon be followed by my discharge from my three years' job at the Foreign Office, and that I should come back to settle down to my old University work without delay, and face all the problems that were to come when three or four thousand demobilized temporary officers descended on Oxford, intent on getting degrees of some sort in the shortest time reasonably possible. But it so befell that I was not discharged from my Foreign Office work for many months, being set on to a number of odd jobs—the most important of which was the drawing up of a Blue Book on the Origins of the War, containing many things that could not have been published while the struggle was still going on. I had also to construct a number of historical *précis*, with maps appended, on the former boundaries of states whose area might be varied by the results of the approaching Peace Conference at Versailles. So I acquired, and reproduced, much interesting information about units as small as Luxemburg and as large as Poland. I was still at work on this sort of business

when I was given a wholly different task. The British Army had settled down solidly on the Rhine, and was beginning the process of demobilization, since it was now clear that there was no danger whatever of disturbance from German discontent, and that the Cologne district was absolutely quiet under our very considerate and easygoing rule, whose mildness was a source of intense amazement to the natives. They were well aware of what German military administration was like in conquered countries, and had expected something of the same sort from us.

The army of occupation on the Rhine therefore had nothing military to do, save the daily routine of drill and instruction, and all the men were eagerly waiting to be demobilized, and sometimes grumbling at delays—though a vast proportion of them were by now recruits of 1918, who had seen no service, and had been drafted into the depleted cadres, after the War was all over. On the principle that 'Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands [or, of course, equally for idle brains] to do', the Government had schemes for distracting the minds of men waiting for demobilization in many ways—teaching the elements of vocational training was one idea, another was courses of lectures on subjects likely to interest intelligent audiences, on any and every kind of subject—natural history, science, geography, travel, even art and literature and modern history. I had got an invitation from Sir Aylmer Haldane, the commander of the VI Corps, to come to Cologne and lecture to his officers and men, on any subject that I thought might interest them, in the historical way, and this was made into an official job by the War Office. In addition the Foreign Office gave me some side issues to look after—one was to see if there was any reality in the idea on which the French were so keen, the agitation for

the setting up of an independent Rhineland republic. Another was the collection of war-time German books and pamphlets for the library of the National War Museum, which was naturally short of such material, as it could not be procured during the years when hostilities were in progress. I found 'nothing doing' with respect to the former quest—the movement was invisible in the zone of British occupation, and the idea of it repulsive. It was only in the French zone that there were agitations, not spontaneous, but entirely inspired from outside, and only taken up by persons of little character or respectability.

I sent many books to the War Museum. The Germans were glad to get rid of them at any price—their pages were for the most part chauvinistic, and many of them full of political hopes that had now to be disavowed, and prophecies that had been wholly falsified. They tasted bitter to the mouth of the defeated German, and inspired him with disgust. I was amused to find that most of the booksellers had shunted them away into garrets or cellars, and made no haste to produce them. I thought at first that they had been hidden, for fear that the sight of them might irritate the British Army of Occupation—or at least the few officers who could read them. But I presently came to the conclusion that the Germans really loathed the books, which had kept them for years in a 'fools' paradise' of expected victory, and were ready to sell them at derisory prices, merely in order to get rid of them. Sometimes they went to unconvincing lengths in their disavowal of this literature—there were books which had printed on their front pages the 'Gott strafe England' poem: one bookseller tried to assure me that the poem never had any popularity among respectable people, and had been thought rather vulgar. This, I fear, I did *not* believe.

I had just been elected junior burgess to represent the University in Parliament when this commission to the Rhineland came into operation. The directions, indeed, had been given me before my nomination, when it was not in the least settled that I should stand for the University seat. And as I had accepted the job with pleasure, and thought that some knowledge of conquered Germany might be very useful to a member of Parliament, I went off at once in March, only looking in at Westminster to take my seat as a matter of formality. I have never regretted the excursion, which gave me some unique psychological experiences, and made me understand many things that would have escaped my notice, if I had never gone to Cologne, or had only gone there after the British occupation had lost its first freshness.

March winds were still bitter, and the Channel was very cold, though calm, when I made my crossing. It was only some days after I had settled down at Cologne that I find my note on April 6th—'wind more kindly, the trees perceptibly greener than when I arrived—I think that spring is here at last'. One sensation of my first Channel crossing since 1914 still remains with me—in spite of three months' fishing for German mines in the Channel and the North Sea, it was known that many of them were still undiscovered, and that the recent gales had brought some up from their moorings under water. Hence we were all told to assume life-belts during the passage and to keep wary. I found mine very uncomfortable, worn over a thick great-coat, and thought that we all looked grotesque. 'A very bulbous party' is my note of the day.

My younger daughter had been nursing in France for the last year, and had not yet been demobilized, though she was at the very end of her time. She met

me on the quay at Boulogne by special leave, but I had only an hour with her, in which she told me some humorous tales of the nursing profession, which had nearly worn her out, but had not quenched her sense of the ridiculous.

All the passengers on the old *Princess Victoria*—turned back to normal Channel duty after four years of requisitioning—were officers returning to their units on the Rhine after leave, save myself, one other civilian, and two French ladies with special passports. We were all turned into a most curious train on Boulogne Quay. It had been used for ambulance work for the last three years, and had only just been reconverted for passenger service on the direct route to Cologne. I thought that I could still detect a faint reek of iodoform about everything, and wondered if I should have agonizing dreams in the night—left behind as an atmosphere by the hundreds of wounded men who must have been occupying my bunk. I had no such experience, however, having sat up most of the night talking with an Australian transport-officer just back from Palestine, who had buried treasure on the brain, and wanted to get back to Egypt, to dig in certain likely spots, which he had marked down. The train spent the whole night in crawling through newly relaid lines in the devastated area, and I woke at Mons, in a town where there had been no fighting since the first days of the War, and the original German rush through unhappy Belgium. Between Charleroi and Namur we passed through several of the villages which the Germans had burned in August 1914, notably Tamines—still a desolate ruin—where they shot 300 civilians. But these were not the only signs of war—stacked by nearly every station, and sometimes in trains on sidings, were vast quantities of German war-material, guns, caissons, and motor



lorries of all sorts, which were still waiting for removal three months after the armistice. Belgium looked very unkempt and desolate—there were few signs of reparation yet—hardly a cow to be seen in the fields, and very few horses. All through the Liège country the factories were standing idle and gutted, because their machinery had been stolen and carried off to Germany. There was a great contrast when once we had passed the Belgian frontier: rather contrary to my expectation there were plenty of animals to be seen in the countryside as we sped towards Cologne, and naturally there were no ruined houses.

We were fed in a very casual fashion on our converted ambulance train—large slabs of well-cooked but roughly carved cold veal-and-ham pie, and bread and cheese. Drinks came in cracked teacups, and one knife and fork had to serve for everything. The food was quite satisfying, but casually served by untidy soldier-waiters. However, there was plenty to eat, and we were a large and merry party.

At dusk we reached Cologne, where I found a VI Corps military motor waiting for me, and was whisked off to General Haldane's headquarters, in a fine big modern villa, in the residential suburb of Lindenthal. Here I was most hospitably welcomed by a very lively staff, and had much interesting talk at dinner with men who had gone through the whole show, and were willing to talk about it. This I found afterwards was rather exceptional—it was only a minority who were reminiscent and informative: a great many were not fond of retailing their experiences, which had to be elicited by careful and tactful questioning. The aide-de-camp who had special charge of me was a very live wire indeed—captured by the Germans rather early in the War, he had been three years a prisoner, though

he had made three attempts to escape, of which the first two failed disastrously, from chances that could not be foreseen. He finally got away with a lively and vindictive memory of certain German prison camp-commandants, whose after-fate he trusted had been unpleasant.

The General told me that they were going to work me pretty hard in the lecture way, and so indeed they did. On some days I spoke to three separate units quartered each twenty miles from the next. This involved much motoring, which became pleasant enough as April passed along and the winds grew milder. But it is not of my own lectures that I have to tell, but rather of the aspect of Germany and the relations of its inhabitants with the intrusive British Army of Occupation.

My first impression was that in a short three months many of the effects of the war-stress seemed to have died down. I had rather expected to find the whole of the population looking half-starved, and clothed in *Ersatz* garments, made of cheap and nasty substitutes for wool, cotton, or linen. How far things in March and April differed from things in December and January, when the first British troops began to settle down, I cannot say. But certainly there were now comparatively few signs of the war-privations visible. There were certainly some pinched faces, some anaemic-looking children, and plenty of demobilized soldiers whose general aspect showed that they had been going through the same experiences in the trenches as our own men. But there were no rags or tatters, no parade of misery, no street loafing, nor queues beside the food-shops. Milk, indeed, and tobacco were the only commodities of which there seemed to be a serious shortage. I believe that for the salaried pensioner and *rentier* classes, the people living on fixed incomes, the

worst times were still some months in the future: for the mark had not yet suffered that rapid and fantastic decline in purchasing power which was to start soon after the time of my visit. The English paper pound was exchanging for fifty-five or sixty German paper marks, instead of for the twenty at which it had been valued in 1914. But German commodities, though they had become very dear from the point of view of the German with a fixed income, were still marked up at prices not so very greatly exceeding their pre-war valuation. Hence such people could still buy, though not on their former scale. No one in April 1919 was dreaming of the time when the noughts at the bottom of a bill multiplied with such horrible persistence, when the stamp on a foreign letter was two milliards of marks, and 100,000 marks was a mean tip to a waiter. It was when the purchasing power of the mark dwindled to practically zero that the German professional and *rentier* classes suffered their agony of semi-starvation. It was far off still at the time when I was in Cologne.

But for the English officer in Cologne commodities still seemed very cheap, since he was getting sixty marks for his pound, and the sort of articles that he wanted to buy were still valued at not so very much larger a number of marks than in 1914. I remember that prudent buyers invariably provided themselves with telescopes and all manner of binoculars at ridiculously easy prices; and what may be called luxury-goods, such as inlaid furniture, high-class porcelain and cutlery, eau-de-Cologne, scientific instruments, books and pictures, and all the class of things which had not been directly affected by the war-needs of the Germans, were to be had at what was to us about a third of what they cost in England. The explanation,

clearly, was that the pound had appreciated threefold, and the German seller had not yet discovered that the mark had really fallen to a third of its former value—he was ere so very long to discover that it might fall to a millionth of it. My own particular experience was to find that the Cologne coin-dealers were selling good Roman denarii at three marks apiece, which meant, from my point of view, one shilling, and that was absurdly moderate: three marks would have meant three shillings in 1914.

The odd thing about currency in Cologne, in April 1919, was that while there were plenty of five-mark and ten-mark paper notes circulating, small change had almost disappeared. It will be remembered that all German fractional money had formerly been in nickel: but the Government in the later years of the War had confiscated all the nickel for military purposes, and tried to replace it with an iron currency. This was not only unsightly—it turned black and flaked on the surface in a disgusting way,—but also was insufficient in quantity. The result had been that municipalities had issued white-metal local tokens for 10, 20, or 50 pfennigs, and, in much greater quantities, paper notes for equally mean sums, up to a mark. These circulated without difficulty in the place where they were issued, though they soon grew very grubby, and were crumpled, folded, and mended with stamp edging, till they became decidedly repulsive. But the tiresome part of getting small change for a five-mark unit was that everyone endeavoured to put off on the buyer notes that did not belong to the place in which he might be at the moment. These could not be passed on, since the wary native refused to accept them. But there were numerous exchange offices for local paper money, to which it was possible to take the pieces and get for

them some proportion of their facial value. For example, at Cologne one could get Bonn or Düsseldorf paper exchanged at, perhaps, three-fourths of its nominal amount: but Danzig or Breslau notes were almost valueless, since those places were too remote from the note-changer's office to allow him to communicate with them freely. This difficulty was by no means confined to Germany, as everyone who travelled by rail in France in 1919 will well remember. A Lille franc would not pass in Amiens, nor an Amiens franc in Reims, and it was some time before the central government succeeded in compelling the municipalities to redeem their local stuff with Government notes. I do not suppose that this was ever done with the small paper change in Germany, for within a few months of my departure a 10-pfennig or 20-pfennig note had become of such infinitesimal value that they would purchase nothing, and must (I suppose) have been mostly thrown away. But in April 1919 ten pfennigs would still purchase a box of matches, or a good long tramway ride, which a year later would have had to be paid for with several marks.

But enough about currency. I have far more interesting matter to tell of. The first and most overwhelming impression which came upon me when I had been a couple of days in Cologne was that the Germans were astoundingly, and indeed unintelligibly, friendly. Where I had expected to see lowering faces, and perhaps to hear muttered curses, I found what I can only call obsequious and obliging politeness from every class of people—except, indeed, the military, with whom we did not get into touch as soldiers, since they had either gone off into unoccupied Germany, or shed their uniforms and became distinguishable from civilians only by their war-worn aspect. But the *bourgeoisie*,

from the richest manufacturers down to small shopkeepers, were distressingly friendly, and were going out of their way to make things easy and pleasant. So, most certainly, were the peasantry, with whom 'Tommy', billeted among them, had become so popular that the military authorities had to issue a proclamation dissuading the troops from what was called 'Fraternization'.

I must give two illustrative anecdotes to explain the situation. Motoring one day with the General in the romantic hills of the Siebengebirge, on the other side of the Rhine, we came on an idyllic scene in front of a waterfall. A young British corporal with a kodak was posing a very pretty village girl in a red skirt and black bodice on the rustic bridge which spanned the waterfall, with an immense amount of grins and giggling on both sides. As the General's little flag shot round the sharp corner, we got a second's glimpse of the scene. Then followed a little scream, the girl plunged into the bushes behind her, the corporal jumped behind a rock. 'What about the edict against Fraternization?' said the General with a smile—'I *ought* to speak about this to the colonel in the village below—but I *shan't*.'

The other story is still more ludicrous. The officer commanding a battalion told me that he had just received from one of his men a formal request for leave to marry a German girl—the first case that had occurred of the sort. The man was told that this was quite against the edict about Fraternization, and asked in a minatory manner to explain his extraordinary conduct. 'Well,' replied the very confidential Tommy, 'you see, sir, I have been billeted in her father's house for two months now. She cooks twice as well as any girl in Bolton, and she does three times as much housework,

and Gretchen's quite willing.' The colonel was so much amused that, instead of inflicting punishment, he delivered a judgment *à la Solomon*. 'You are nearly at the head of the list for demobilization: I demobilize you here and now: you will catch the evening boat down the Rhine at six o'clock, and on Thursday you will be at the Crystal Palace, where you will be turned loose. If you are really in love with Gretchen, you can come back as a civilian, and get her to marry you if you can. But if it's only cupboard love, as I suspect, you'll forget all about her, when you get back among the Bolton lasses.' What was to be the end of the story the colonel could not guess—no more could I, to whom he told the tale next day, while Tommy was on the way to England.

I am told that this was but the first example of an affliction that seemed contagious, and that, among the regiments which stayed for a long time in the Rhine garrisons, such alliances were ere long officially permitted. Some corps brought home a perceptible number of German spouses: how the ladies fared in English surroundings I cannot say. But there is no doubt, from what I heard at the time, that 'Gretchen was willing', and that Tommy was considered an attractive wooer.

But 'Fraternization' proved a serious problem far higher up the social scale. The difficulty was to keep the Germans from being *too* friendly. The involuntary host of the headquarters staff of the VI Corps was an example. One would have supposed that he would have resented the confiscation for long months of his big villa at Lindenthal, full of inlaid furniture, stained glass, modern Dresden china, and pictures very much 'after' the Dutch old masters. Quite the reverse. He paid polite calls, and sent in occasional presents of

game, and of particularly choice Rhine wine, which it was hard to refuse. An example at another headquarters, at which I was casually lunching, was even more startling. I congratulated my host on the comfort of his billet, and asked whether there was any fly in the ointment, any drawback to complete content. 'Yes,' replied the major, 'only one: you know that we have left the two top floors to the owner of the house, a very great banker. Of late he and his wife have taken to dropping down to the smoking-room, and telling us stories. That is really not quite pleasant, as it stops our normal conversation.'

When I was at leisure for a few minutes, after a lecture in one of the smaller places, I used generally to take a look at the church. Almost always the priest or the schoolmaster would turn up, and begin to point out to me anything of interest that was to be seen—quite without any solicitation on my part: and the same was the case with custodians of museums or libraries.

This absence of any signs of resentment or discontent during the occupation was puzzling, and rather unpleasant. We all came to Germany with a very strong prejudice against Germans, with vindictive memories of wholly unjustifiable outrages, bombs dropped on small Kentish and Norfolk villages, seaside hamlets shelled, merchant ships sunk without warning by the torpedo, 'spurlos versenkt,' as the German official note had recommended, and the wholesale deportations of civilians in Belgium and Northern France. These were hard to forget, and it was surprising to find that our involuntary hosts obviously expected us to be quite without prejudice against them. I fancy that the knowledge of the outrages committed by their military and naval chiefs had been kept from them by the



careful censoring of newspapers, and that they believed that the atrocities which we cited were the inventions of Lord Northcliffe and his propaganda organization.

No doubt there had been a certain amount of invention or exaggeration in some of the Allied publications concerning German misbehaviour. But there was a sufficient residuum of proved facts, of which we were all eyewitness, to leave a most unpleasant feeling behind. The Germans seemed hardly to understand this: they were not conscious (it appeared) of any moral guilt, and merely acknowledged that by the fault and mismanagement of their Emperor and their generals they had lost the war, and had to take the consequences. There was a very strong feeling against the Kaiser as mainly responsible for the outbreak of the War, and against the generals for not having seen the necessity of making peace in 1916 or 1917, and for having persisted in continuing the struggle instead of patching up a peace on the best terms that could be got—even if they were bad ones. I several times heard it said that the worst crime of the Kaiser's military advisers was that they would not contemplate the entire and instant evacuation of Belgium, with compensation to be paid for its unjustifiable devastation. The Entente Powers would have been wholly justified in demanding this. But the generals hankered after the strategical advantage for the future in keeping the whole, or part, of Belgium in German hands, and blocked all peace-prospects, of which the first and essential clause was that Belgium should be evacuated.

The average intelligent German with whom I came into contact was well aware that Germany had been beaten, and ascribed the disaster to the faults of the late régime, against which he retained a deep grudge. But he seemed quite unconscious that we, for our part,

had a grudge not only against the Kaiser, the 'Schlieffen plan', General Bernhardt's books, or General Ludendorff's or Admiral Tirpitz's methods, but against the German people at large, as responsible for their rulers—for having taken up an unjust cause and condoned atrocious methods of warfare. They were a little surprised at the coldness with which we received their rather too effusive welcome to the Rhine, and their expectation that 'bygones should be treated as by-gones'. They wanted to go back to the mentality of pre-war days. I cannot help quoting a delightful soliloquy by a large rope-manufacturer, with whom I was brought into contact.

'Yes, the Kaiser is gone, thank God! And militarism is gone for ever—thank God still more for that! We are all good West Europeans now! Personally I am wondering how long it will be before I am able to reopen my branch office in Grimsby—which was quite a friendly and profitable little affair.'

This was a crude presentation of the German mentality—it was not all of them who failed to realize the grudge that they had brought upon themselves. But I think that there was a certain general feeling that on the whole the Army of Occupation was behaving with surprising moderation, and that they ought to be grateful for it, and to avoid all carping and provocative recrimination. The example of what the French occupation was like farther south was sufficient to make the whole population regard the British occupation as almost a blessing in disguise. We had not packed the Cologne district with masses of black troops of doubtful discipline, nor had we endeavoured to suborn unscrupulous nobodies into starting an agitation for an independent Rhineland republic, nor did we go out of our way to snub all local authorities,

or use violent threats where mere cautions would suffice. I spent a short time in Trier, flooded with African troops; the contrast with Cologne was surprising, and agreeable to our national self-respect: so was the attitude of the native population.

I suppose that it was largely the wisdom and moderation of English military rule on the Rhine that accounted for the absolute peacefulness of the countryside. In the two months that were ending when I went back to Westminster there had been only one assault on an isolated British soldier—he had been knocked down, but not badly hurt, in a village near Solingen, perhaps not entirely without excuse. It was absolutely safe to wander alone—one saw young officers with fishing-rods whipping the trout-streams in the Siebengebirge miles away from the nearest garrison. Nobody seemed to mind if one trespassed over the legal boundary of the British occupation, to seek a viewpoint and a draught of beer in unoccupied Germany. It was often, in later months, borne in on me with a feeling of depression, that if British officers and soldiers wandered about in Ireland, as they did in the Rhineland, they would be assassinated. But the Germans, with all their faults, were not then given to assassination.

One curious example of the way in which the whole representative mass of the Cologne population accepted the British occupation, as something quite normal and not unfriendly, was shown at the theatre. General Plumer had resolved to have a gala performance given at the great opera-house, in honour of our American neighbour-garrison at Bonn, and invited its commanding general and several hundreds of officers to come over to Cologne to enjoy *Rigoletto*. The opera-management were quite willing—but what was intensely surprising

—the musical and fashionable section of the citizens were greatly pleased at the idea, and attended in full force. Every seat that was not booked for an English or an American officer was occupied by a respectable German or his wife or daughter. The crowd in the *foyer* between the acts was a polyglot assembly—all on the most polite of terms, if not exactly sociable. I had expected the performance to be boycotted in the most rigid fashion by the natives, since it was by way of being a military affair, commemorating British and American solidarity. It turned out to be merely a considerable social event for the musical people of Cologne.

At the VI Corps headquarters we put up that night a very amusing old American colonel, full of good Yankee stories, who was in a state of high indignation at the recent introduction of 'Prohibition' in his native country. He declared with much vehemence that the 'Cranks' had passed the law, while all the good boys were in Europe, and when the Army got home they would see all that nonsense repealed. This, alas! was too optimistic a hope: I have occasionally wondered at intervals during the last twelve years how that good old man was getting the whisky which he regarded as one of the necessities of life.

Isolated pictures from the book of memory sometimes remain clear, when all the minor details have faded away. One that struck me deeply at the time, and which has often recurred to me in subsequent years, is an abandoned German field-gun, tumbled into the ditch at the foot of the ascent of the high road into Bensberg. We heard how a battery had disbanded itself without orders, when well across the Rhine, while halted at the steep hill in front, which required to be mounted with tired and starved horses in insufficient

numbers. A good part of the men had refused to obey the officers' orders to press up the slope, and had simply unhitched their horses and ridden away. The officers had succeeded in keeping some remnant of the battery together, but could not horse all the guns—the last was shoved into the wayside-ditch, and lay there rusting: I had occasion to pass it several times, and thought that it would have made a capital tail-piece for the last chapter of some book dealing with the history of the War.

A more brilliant memory is that of a great international military gathering on April 9th, when Lord Plumer (General Plumer as he was then) held a sort of court or reception, to which were invited all the senior officers of every nation that was represented in the occupation of the Rhineland, and representatives of all the more distant Allies also. There were not only British, French, Americans, and Belgians in large droves, but Italians, Japanese, Serbians, Portuguese, Czechoslovaks, and Poles, all in their gala uniforms with every medal and order that they could muster. The gathering was in the largest official hall that could be found in Cologne, and that was by no means too spacious. The glitter and glare and kaleidoscopic *défilade* of uniforms of every colour, spangled with decorations of unfamiliar orders, was almost overpowering. I noted that George Prothero, Editor of the *Quarterly*, and I were the only two individuals not in military array in the whole vast assembly. Like myself, Prothero was with the Army on a lecturing tour. Several officers remarked to me that just a year before, on April 9, 1918, the Germans had made their last great attack on the British line in France, and had driven in their great wedge of advance, where the unlucky Portuguese gave way: it had been a very bad

day indeed. And who could have guessed that on the corresponding day of 1919 we should have been keeping high festival in a German palace! I had many short talks with all manner of interesting people, from General Plumer himself to old Belgian and Portuguese acquaintances. The buffets overflowed with German sparkling wines, we were all of us exhilarated—many I think a little hysterical and abnormal. After four years of the long stress of war, with all its mud and blood, this blaze of lights and luxury and good comradeship and triumph was unnatural, as well as intoxicating. Men in the mass are swayed by curious waves of enthusiasm or depression. One man said to me that the whole scene appeared to him unreal, not a nightmare but the opposite of a nightmare—a fantastic and unconvincing ecstasy. Another said that he could only think of the hundreds of good friends who had *not* lived to see the end of the show. Some journalists compared that evening, for mere spectacular effect and high-pressure of feeling, to Wellington's famous ball on the eve of Waterloo. But there is all the difference in the world between excitement and stress of feeling *before* the action, and excitement on the appreciation of the reality of victory after the greatest stress of trial that the world has ever known.

I only know that the whole scene had made an impression on me unlike anything that I had ever felt before, that I found it hard to master its full meaning, and that I went to bed at midnight in a state of complete physical exhaustion, and slept like the dead, till the soldier-servant came to wake me in the morning.

For a week more after that extraordinary night I was lecturing hard around the VI Corps area, to every variety of troops—infantry, artillery, machine-gun units, engineers, etc.—and gave them what I

trusted might suit them in the way of miscellaneous historical interest, from 'Rumour in Time of War' to daily life in Wellington's army and the experiences of the Crusaders in Palestine. I am bound to say that they made very good audiences. At last I found that my short leave from the Foreign Office and the House of Commons was over, and hied me home, in company with a VI Division brigadier who had business in London. We had a most stormy passage over the narrow seas: we had started from Boulogne with the intention of reaching Folkestone, but the wind drove us up-Channel, and we had to make Dover, some hours late. Most of the company were in a sad state of collapse.

Reaching Victoria before dusk, I went to the Foreign Office, to hand in the report which I had drawn up on the subjects which had been commended to me for observation. I was sent on to 10, Downing Street, but Philip Kerr was away, and I was interviewed by Mr. Lloyd George's celebrated lady secretary—very famous in her day—who promised that my points should be duly submitted in the right quarter. I did recognize one of them in the Prime Minister's next speech—a most amusing one, in which he made his celebrated assault on Lord Northcliffe, whom he accused of being the prince of mischief-makers. He raged at the peer, and called *The Times* 'a paper supposed on the Continent to be influential, but which *we* know to be only a threepenny edition of the *Daily Mail*'. He described its proprietor as a megalomaniac who sat waiting by the Mediterranean shore for an appeal to come and save Europe, which no one dreamed of making. He even hinted at something more than mere megalomania, tapping his forehead with his finger, and saying 'the vanity has got as far as *that*'. Altogether a

most humorous exhibition of clever and angry oratory, but perhaps hardly as dignified as one might have wished.

After this I dropped into the routine of parliamentary life, then quite new to me, and found my personal experiences in the Rhineland useful in the way of enabling me to discount much of the rhetoric that I heard. But I was far too young a member to dare to make any comments of my own, and had to content myself with the rather Pharisaic reflection that, at any rate, I was not as other members are, who persist in talking at vast length on subjects of which they have no real knowledge.



## CHAPTER XII

### FASCISTS AND COMMUNISTS IN ITALY

APRIL 1921

IN my short Easter parliamentary holiday of 1921 I visited Italy for the first time since the spring of 1914, greatly wondering how much I should find changed of the old pre-war conditions which had been familiar to me for so many years. One gathered from the English newspapers that the country was in a disturbed state, but information was scanty and most unrepresentative. The Rome correspondents were far too much engrossed with the merely parliamentary aspect of Italian politics. Possibly they were anxious to keep in good odour with the government under which they were living, and did not wish to have their communications mutilated, or to be treated as *personae non gratae*. At any rate, the impression left on readers in London was that there was a good deal of local trouble prevalent, but not (as was really happening) that the whole system of parliamentary government in Italy was in serious danger, and that organizations tending to destroy it were at work. As an example of the ignorance in which we were kept, I may mention that the name Mussolini does not occur in *Palmer's Times Index* for 1921.

I must confess that I was surprised to find myself in the midst of chaos and civil war the moment that the St. Gotthard railway and the Swiss frontier had been

left behind. I had on this occasion got my son with me—he was an undergraduate in his first year, reading for the Modern History school (mediaeval period), and anxious to get a glimpse of the monuments of the Italy of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Owing to the War, he had never had the chance of going South before, and there was every reason that he should see the country, now that travel-conditions were said to be getting better—*most* untruly, as we found out. For our travel was uncomfortable and even dangerous, as will be seen.

The Giolitti ministry was then in power, though near the end of its term, and was proving itself quite unable to keep the peace, as we soon discovered. Old-fashioned Italian Liberalism was quite played out, and there seemed as yet nothing ready to take its place. This was not to be quite the last of the ineffective Liberal administrations; when it fell in June 1921—two months after my visit—there were to be several more ephemeral ministries, before Mussolini carried out his extraordinary *coup d'état* of November 1922. The only thing that the Giolitti ministry had done of real importance was to condone, and take advantage of, d'Annunzio's piratical seizure of Fiume from the Yugo-Slavs, to whom it had been allotted by the Treaty of Versailles. What it had not succeeded in doing was to suppress something very like civil war, into which we found ourselves plunged the moment that we arrived at Milan. It is the custom in many circles nowadays to criticize Mussolini and the Fascist movement, but those who had a glimpse of the anarchical Italy of 1921, and compare it with the Italy of to-day, will be very loth to do so.

Not the whole country indeed, but most of its large cities and some of its rural districts, were reeking with strikes, riots, and isolated acts of banditry and violence,

with which the existing succession of Liberal Governments did not seem in the least able to deal. The whole of the country seemed to be in a disgruntled state of mind—the aftermath of the Great War, which had been expected to bring about a Golden Age in Italy, but which had, as a matter of fact, produced political disappointments, enormously high prices for all the commodities of life, and much dislocation of trade and industry. The Socialist party, which demanded a revolutionary change in constitution and social conditions, was on the top of the wave, with a large representation in Parliament (120 members, I believe) and a noisy agitation all over the country. Its ‘maximalist’ or ‘extremist’ wing was encouraging open anarchy—such as the seizure of factories by the workmen employed in them, or of land by agriculturists living under a *métayer* system,—and was praising the Bolsheviks of Russia as examples and forerunners.

I was fated to witness the ignominious spectacle of troops and police standing aside, and allowing armed factions to fight out their rivalry in the street—quite like Shakespeare’s Montagues and Capulets in *Romeo and Juliet*. Everything was out of gear—it took three days for a letter from Verona to reach Venice, only sixty miles away, and there was no certainty of the starting of trains, still less of their arrival. It took some time for war conditions to settle down in France, as I well knew; but in Italy little in the way of reparation and reorganization seemed to have been done, even two years and a half after the Armistice. Every house looked as if it needed not only a coat of paint but structural repairs. The famous Brera gallery at Milan had only got four or five rooms open out of its twenty, and the museum at Padua and the great Academy at Venice had not yet opened at all. Prices had about quadrupled

since the War, but the shops looked very empty—not even the trading classes or the agricultural classes were drawing any profit from the enhanced values. One got about 100 lire for the English pound-note, but this did not compensate for the extra expense of living. The most distressing thing was that no one seemed to have any confidence in the existing government, or hope that things were about to take a turn for the better. Discontent and pessimism seemed to prevail, with little sign as yet of any salvation to come. The Fascist movement was only just beginning, and was (very naturally) frowned on by the authorities.

The governing fact when I arrived at Milan was that on March 23rd a Communist—he was never identified—had just hurled a most effective bomb into the pit of the Diana Theatre, *pour épater les bourgeois*. Twenty persons had been killed, and as many as ninety-two more or less severely wounded. This had led to a wild retaliatory rising by the middle classes, who had burned the offices of Socialist newspapers, and the headquarters of the trade unions, and had practically dethroned authority for some days, and taken possession of the city. The name 'Fascist' was evidently not familiar to me at the moment—I find that I wrote home: 'Milan is in an attitude of bitter tension: there is a perfect fury against the Italian "Bolsheviks": and the armed bourgeoisie, who call themselves Fascisti—a kind of militant Primrose League apparently—have been taking the law into their own hands, and have been shooting prominent Communists wherever they can catch them. The newspapers seem rather to approve of this rough justice, and are not at all shocked. It reminds one of the "unauthorized reprisals" which our "Black and Tans" in Ireland are accused of taking. The Prefect and Syndic have got agonized proclama-

tions posted up, appealing to citizens to be calm, and promising five thousand lire reward to anyone who catches the actual bomb-thrower at the Diana Theatre. All assemblies of over one hundred people are forbidden. I doubt if this is taken seriously by the Fascisti, who are very much in evidence, driving about furiously in motors like so many Jehus. They are really the dominating force in the city and armed to the teeth.'

'It is probably in consequence of these developments that we have North Italy almost to ourselves—a very few English, a few Americans, a few French, but three-quarters of the rooms in every hotel are shut up. At the famous Brera Gallery, usually so thronged, there were only five people—in the Poldi-Pezzoli Gallery four—who chanced to be French.'

This was written on April 1st, after which, leaving excited Milan behind, we turned for a few days into the old historical towns of Lombardy, where pictures and architecture take up the attention of the tourist, and no industrial or political contest was raging to distract him. Mantua was even more decayed than of yore—with grass growing in the streets, and the vast ducal palace more empty and cobwebbed than ever. The pictures were still in the packing-cases of 1915, and seemed likely to remain there. Padua had been a military headquarters two years before, during the battles on the Piave, and had attracted some Austrian bombs, whose holes were not all repaired. It was not quite so dead as Mantua, but its picture gallery was still shut up and inaccessible. We had its largest hotel practically to ourselves. Fortunately there was no trouble on—Communists had not been throwing bombs, nor Fascisti turning out to resent this amiable habit.

Our real excitement was reserved for Venice, where we witnessed four days of sporadic fighting from the

7th to the 10th of April, with the Army—an astonishing abnegation of duty—looking on as spectator, while the Communists and Fascists fought their noisy but not very bloody battles up and down the narrow *calles* and across the open *campi* of this most labyrinthine city. It was a phenomenon which I should not have believed possible if I had not seen it.

We reached Venice on April 5th in drifting rain, which spoiled the weird effect of the quaint journey by side-canal—with angles made vociferous by the *stale* and *premi* of unseen gondoliers round the corner—by which one normally passes from the railway station to the broad entrance of the Grand Canal. We found my old hotel almost empty—perhaps forty people where there always used to be something like two hundred. The main item among the guests was an organized party of schoolgirls, conducted by an old gentleman and lady, who must have been the proprietors of what used to be called a ‘ladies’ seminary’ in my young days. There were, I think, about a score of the girls, all ranging between fifteen and seventeen, and some very nice-looking. When they defiled in to dinner, with the dignified old gentleman at their head, they reminded me irresistibly of Major-General Stanley and his tribe of daughters in the *Pirates of Penzance*, and I half expected to hear them break out into an explanatory chorus, concerning the beauties of Venice. They were destined, like ourselves, to have some odd experiences during the next few days.

The hotel manager, who was trying to conceal evident anxiety behind a cheerful countenance, told us that the Socialist party in Venice was wildly enraged, both with the Government and with the Fascisti, who were trying to do what the Government was failing to do, in the way of keeping down disorder. The Socialist

organizers were threatening a general strike, but there were so many cross-interests of trade unions involved, that he did not think they would succeed in carrying out their project. Meanwhile, he owned it was an anxious time for hotel-keepers, who were responsible for the safety and comfort of their clients.

We got one day of undisturbed sightseeing in Venice and had done the Cathedral and the Doge's Palace, and the Museo Civico—the great Academy was still closed, and its Carpaccios and Bellinis, still in their war-time shelters—when on the night of the 6th the news came round that the Socialist committee *had* succeeded in pulling all the unions together for the threatened general strike, and that we should see what it was like when next morning dawned. And it was perfectly true: the whole of the industrial classes had joined in, and all the transport workers of every sort.

Now in the strange city of Venice, as everyone knows, the normal way of getting about is by water, the streets being not only narrow and impossible for wheeled traffic, but also incredibly tortuous, as they have to dodge the innumerable side-canal that cut up the two islands which form the main block of the inhabited area. All short-cuts can only be made by gondola, and all long distances are much more easily covered by boat than by pedestrian exercise. Now the organizers of the strike had succeeded in coercing every body of transport workers—not only the railwaymen at the station, who could have passed one back to the mainland, but all the gondoliers, all the crews of the little steamers by which one travels down the Grand Canal or to the Lido, all the ferrymen who work the passages across the canals from bank to bank, and all seamen of the ships which ply on the Adriatic to Ancona, Trieste, Fiume, and the Dalmatian coast. It

was as impossible to get away by finding a sea-going vessel as to get away by train to the mainland. The strikers had a special organization to block the great station; not only had they cleared out the railway servants, but they had immense pickets watching the points of access, pickets of boats on the water side, and a really dangerous crowd on the land side, who mishandled anyone that tried to push his way through.

The first impression of surprise, when one came down to breakfast on April 7th, was to see the broad expanse of the Grand Canal without any water-craft of any kind upon it—no passenger steamers, no gondolas, no barges, no tradesmen's boats, where one was accustomed to see a continual procession of traffic of all sorts. I asked the manager whether it was possible to get off by sea, but he told me, and it was true, that the big passenger steamers for Trieste or Fiume were being held up, as much as the little *vaporetti* that ply about among the islands of the lagoons. There was no chance of retiring from Venice, and inside circulation was only possible on foot, and had become a puzzling matter, since certain regions were in the hands of the crowds of strikers, and they were liable to make offensive raids into others.

This I found to be a very accurate forecast. There was a block of streets in the lesser island, the one west of the Grand Canal, where the Communists seemed to dominate, and they had also control on the west end of the larger isle as far as the railway station. On the other hand, there were regions, on the south and east sides of the larger island, where they only came intermittently, apparently with the object of making shops shut up, which kept open in defiance of them, or of demonstrating before public offices. There was always



a noisy crowd of them opposite the land-front of the Prefect's Palace on the Grand Canal.

The conduct of the authorities was extraordinary. I do not know whether the Prefect or the officer in command of the garrison was the more responsible, or whether both (perhaps) were fettered by instructions from Rome, forbidding the drastic intervention of armed force. But they kept a large body of troops—at least a battalion—under arms in St. Mark's Square, apparently to protect the Cathedral and the Doge's Palace, and they stationed considerable forces at the heads of the two bridges, the Rialto bridge and the Ponte de Ferro opposite the Academy, and they kept large guards at the Arsenal and at the Prefect's Palace, but they made no attempt to take the offensive, and to clear the streets of the mobs which were surging up and down. One would have supposed that it would have been their duty to liberate the railway station, and to set the train service going again, and to keep very strong patrols moving in the main thoroughfares, so as to make the circulation of pedestrians possible. Possibly also the naval force present—there were several warships available—should have kept picket-boats circulating on the Grand Canal, to clear off the boycott which was being kept up on the water-front, at the station, and elsewhere. But they did nothing of the sort: the only policy adopted, as far as I could see, was for the protection of the ancient monuments and the public offices, by a passive display of force. Apparently the idea was that bloodshed must be avoided at all costs, that firing on the mob would provoke repercussions of the Socialist party all round Italy, which would be dangerous to the credit of the Government for moderation and impartiality. So for the last four days of my sojourn in Venice mob-law

was allowed to rule in great part of the city, and, where it met with active opposition, this was not from the forces of the Crown, but from the Fascisti. Of this my son and I had ocular demonstration.

Finding ourselves marooned, as it were, in Venice, we resolved that we would, despite of the riots, see all that we could see. Gondolas being unprocurable, all sightseeing had to be managed on foot. And anyone who is acquainted with the extraordinary fashion in which the city is cut up by the minor canals will realize the immense difficulty of getting from one point to another wholly by streets and bridges. Often one had to make detours of a quarter of a mile, and to go round three sides of a square. But perseverance, and the meticulous use of a large-scale map, enabled us to do much more than we had expected, and we succeeded in visiting all the churches and other points of interest in the southern side of the main island, from San Giovanni Crisostomo, near the Rialto, to SS. Giovanni and Paolo in the north, and to S. Zaccaria and S. Giorgio dei Schiavoni in the south. The interest of these criss-cross journeys on three successive days was that we occasionally came into the flank or front of a raiding Socialist mob, trying to penetrate into a new district, and then, when we had prudently cleared aside, found ourselves watching a muster of the regional Fascisti, turning out to resist the invasion. The Fascisti seemed all rather young, men of the middle classes who had just been old enough to see the last years of the Great War. They were desperately in earnest, and their side-pockets bulged with revolvers. When fifty or sixty of them had got together, they would charge at the Communist mob, though it outnumbered them five-fold or ten-fold. There followed a lot of squibbing with revolvers, but not so many casualties as one would

have expected. The Communists were much less well armed, and generally gave way without much resistance. They struck one as ill-disposed and mischievous rather than formidable: some seemed in liquor, and were singing discordantly. I should suppose that they were better at breaking windows or plundering shops than at a stand-up fight. But these were only outlying bands; we were careful to avoid approaching their headquarters, in the western island, somewhere (I believe) in the Frari and S. Polo direction. They may have been more pugnacious there than when raiding in strange quarters. I believe that they burnt the Fascist central office in one of their excursions, and that there was prompt retaliation.

I am under the impression that the fact which explains the furious and successful resistance of the Fascists to what had once looked like a flood-tide of Socialist triumph, was entirely due to a psychological cause. The Italian town *bourgeoisie* down to the time of the Great War had been a most apathetic and materialistic class, absorbed in everyday business. But the War had shaken them up—they had been brought face to face with death and danger, and forced to fend for themselves. Many of them had risen to be non-commissioned officers, some to be officers; they had tasted something of command and responsibility. Also they had learnt discipline, and the advantages of combination. Hence the sudden reaction against the Communist propaganda, and the will to fight with reckless courage for one's own views of life and society, and more especially for one's own property. What claim have the idle, the feckless, and the stupid upon one's dearly loved possessions, earned by the work of brain or hand? Silly equalitarianism—an obvious absurdity, for the first glance round one's neighbours shows that

no two men are equal. Shallow humanitarianism—why worship humanity when one is conscious that *either* (as one-half of us are daily repeating) we are miserable sinners, only saved from damnation by some higher power, *or else* (as the other half of us will argue) we are only creatures half-way up a scale of evolution from very humiliating forbears. The theory of democracy? But why should the capables, the inventor, the exploiter, the manager, the organizer, be supposed to be overruled by the incapables, merely because the latter are much more numerous, by the mere counting of noses?

Fascism, as I saw it in an early stage, had not yet developed into the great organization which was to be seen in later years: indeed, the first Fascist Congress was only held in the following November, and Mussolini was not yet its dictator, nor had its creed been drawn up and published. There were yet eighteen months of feeble Liberal ministries to come, before the Fascist *coup d'état* of 1922 was carried out. I do not think that Mussolini's name was yet very well known—his early political career, indeed, had not been such as to attract the confidence of the 'Haves' in their desperate rally to save themselves and their possessions from the 'Have-nots'. His political conversion, or perhaps I should rather say his political evolution, was not yet generally understood. And the programme of reform, order, discipline, self-abnegation, had not yet been fully formulated. What I witnessed in Milan and Venice was the rising of the *bourgeoisie* to protect themselves, when a feeble Liberal Government was practically refusing to protect them, and was allowing such phenomena as the seizure of factories by workmen, the casual dropping of bombs, or the murder of employers and so-called blacklegs by riotous mobs.

As I have said before, the *bourgeoisie* was desperate,

and had just been through a course of war-training which had familiarized it with blood and violent action. It was also nationalist in feeling, and profoundly disgusted with the internationalist tendencies of Socialism and Communism, and the praise of the Russian Bolsheviks, which was continually heard. In some cases the dislike for iconoclasm and blatant irreligion no doubt operated, though I should be loth to say that the Italian *bourgeoisie* were as a rule good Catholics—there were (I imagine) more Freemasons among them than regular communicants. But where clerical influence had any power—there were some thirty 'Populist' members in the Chamber who represented this trend of opinion—it would certainly not be sympathetic toward the Italian representatives of the internationalist Bolshevik element. However, the idea of any alliance between Fascism in its later development and the Papacy was still in the very remote future in 1921.

It is obvious that the task of the Fascisti was made very much more easy by the singular lack of organization and guidance among their enemies. The Socialist leaders were divided between the extremist 'maximalists', who were practically Bolshevik in their tendencies, and the 'reformists', who were not anxious to work by means of mob violence and 'direct action'. The former were the section responsible for the bombs and murders, and did not represent the whole party, but only the more undisciplined and anarchical fraction of it. They produced individuals who committed murders, and mobs which indulged in arson and pillage, but there would appear to have been no central organization, and little regular liaison between the malcontents of different regions. When I succeeded in getting out of Venice, I was surprised to find that the régime of general strikes and anarchy ended at Mestre,

and that there had not been the least trouble at Padua, only thirty miles away. There were several other regional 'general strikes': but as far as I can learn they never coincided in time, or extended over any very large district. The Fascists, when once they had realized their own will to fight, discovered the art of combination, and turned it to account. I may add that they displayed great wisdom and self-abnegation when they resolved to stand by Mussolini, and to grant him dictatorial authority, in spite of origins which were not calculated to inspire their confidence. And, similarly, Mussolini displayed great wisdom and adaptability when he saw that the only way to save Italy, and to restore her national dignity and authority, was to throw over all Socialist internationalist theories and to go back on to 'Italia fara da se'—militant national patriotism. But all this was far in the future when I was an eye-witness of the effervescence in Milan and Venice. Parliamentary Liberalism had still many months before it in which to display its inefficiency, and its dislike to use strong measures in perilous times.

During the 7th, 8th, and 9th of April Venice remained completely isolated, in consequence of the general strike, and my son and I walked warily among ancient churches, keeping a careful eye open for the approach of Communist mobs or excited groups of Fascisti. The conditions of life were beginning to grow tiresome, as the food store of our hotel was limited, and about the third day strange and meagre dishes began to appear, with the prospect of worse things to come. But the Blockade did not last long enough to push us near the edge of starvation. I found it very amusing to watch the bevy of schoolgirls and their two guardians, who formed the main group of our hotel population. The old people were getting nervous, but trying to be

reassuring; the girls were frankly excited and curious, and would have liked to get out and see something of the riots—which of course was forbidden to them. It was on the fourth day that the porter made an interesting proposition to me. He had heard that the authorities had at last made up their minds to run a train to the mainland, despite of the strikers and their mob, which was always besetting both the street and the water approaches to the Great Station. It was to be run by military engineers, since all the railwaymen were still recalcitrant. There would be, no doubt, a vigorous attempt to stop it on the part of the strikers, but the guard at the station had been reinforced by several companies. Now one of the under-porters, whose family happened to live near the station, knew of a side-entrance over a small bridge into the goods yard, which was being picketed very slightly, or sometimes not at all, since the public did not know of it. He said that his subordinate and the 'boots' of the hotel were willing to take us round to this obscure corner, and chance the pickets, for a hundred lire apiece. They would wrap up our suitcases in nondescript bundles or sacks, so as to look like the sort of parcels that a working-man might be carrying 'on his own', and they would put on their most disreputable clothes, so as to pass unnoticed in the crowd of pickets in the streets near the station. We might, he suggested, put on shabby caps, and turn up the collars of our great-coats, and follow our guides at a discreet distance, so as not to seem to belong to them. All the attention of the strikers was being directed to the main entrances, and there was a very fair chance of getting through.

Naturally we jumped at the offer, as we had found four days of general strike quite sufficient to satisfy our curiosity. So we agreed to make the push on the

following morning. We had to allow an hour and a half for the excursion, as the railway station was the farthest point from the hotel that could be found in Venice, and there was not only an extraordinarily circuitous set of side-streets to be followed, but the chance of getting caught in a crowd, and blocked for a long time. The only favourable point was that the station and the hotel were on the same side of the Grand Canal, so there would be no need to cross that broad waterway, whose only three bridges—and especially the one near the station—were well picketed by the strikers, though they were each actually in possession of the military. The accesses to the western or left-hand bridge, the one nearest the station, were particularly well guarded by the strikers, so this, the most obvious route, need not be taken into consideration. We were to devote ourselves entirely to back alleys and obscure bridges over minor canals, in the least central parts of the city.

Our guides duly turned up in 'mufti' of the most disreputable sort; no one could possibly have suspected them of being hotel servants—they looked more like mudlarks. They enveloped my suitcase in an old sack with some straws sticking out of one corner, and my son's in something that looked like an old fish-basket, and, shouldering them, started off northward across by-streets. We shuffled after them twenty yards behind, always keeping them in view. I shall never forget the tortuous nature of the long walk that followed. We avoided all the more usual thoroughfares—we must have crossed the Via alla Posta somewhere, but I do not know how. Then we worked along the side of a minor canal for some time, and turned west till we were somewhere near the old Jewish Synagogue; after that, by an obscure bridge across the Canareggio, we



got somewhere near San Giobbe. For a great part of this long and circuitous transit we met very few foot-passengers, and the streets were of the most dismal order; how many bridges we crossed I should not like to guess. Finally we had worked down to the back of the railway station, and there was (as we had been told) a small side-entrance with a sentinel inside it, and about two disreputable-looking persons, no doubt the pickets, loitering outside. Our guardian angels (such grubby ones) dashed for the gate, dumped down our suitcases in front of the sentry, stripped them of their filthy covers, and grinned at us in triumph. We gave them their hundred lire each, and many words of high approval of their cleverness and daring. The moment they had got the money they waved their hands and fled, at extraordinary speed—this was, I believe, in order that the officious loiterers outside should not get anything like a good look at them. But I should think that it would have been impossible for the keenest-eyed picket to identify two such dirty-looking ragamuffins.

The sentry halted us and called out a corporal, who looked at our passports and sent us over to the main station. It was full of soldiers but very short of passengers. The venturesome train that was to attempt the passage of the two miles of viaduct across the lagoon, which links Venice with the outer world, was a very short one—not more than three or four carriages, I think. The consequence of this was that, in the course of an hour or so of waiting, more and more isolated passengers dropped in—some of them looking very hustled and others rather scared—till the compartments were absolutely crammed. There were fourteen persons at last in ours. They were all talking about the possibility that the strikers, warned that a train

was going to start that morning, might have got explosives on a boat, and laid them somewhere in that two miles of viaduct in the lagoon, to destroy the train in the open, if they could not get at it in the station. The reassuring thing was that other passengers had been told by the engineer commanding officer at the station that last night, the moment that he had been told to prepare to start the train, he had lined the whole length of the viaduct with double sentries ten yards apart, charged to fire at once at anyone trying to land from a boat or a gondola on the railway line. And dawn had shown that there had been no attempt to meddle with the viaduct, as the sentries had already reported.

Finally we started, and did that two miles of narrow line across the lagoon at a very careful pace. When we were well across, we found Mestre station full of soldiers, but this was the last sign of trouble that we were to come across. A lot of our passengers got out at Mestre being bound for Treviso, Bassano, Trieste, or other places, for which lines fork out from the junction. We kept on to Padua, and there got a meal, and waited for the Trieste-Verona-Milan express, by which we were intending to return at once to England. Our late experiences had shown us that Northern Italy was at present not quite a pleasant place for tourists, but it was also a matter of duty to be returning to England, as I found by the Milan papers which I picked up at Padua station. We had, of course, been out of reach of English papers, and had received no letters for a good week. But I gathered that the great coal strike of 1921 was now on, and that it was possible that there was to be a railway strike also. Even the idea of a general strike—which did not materialize till long after—was in the air. So it was evidently the duty of

a member of Parliament to cut short his Easter holiday, and come back to Westminster at once. I had intended to show my son Lucerne and Basle on the way home, but these stops (I now considered) had better be cancelled, and we would pass, sleeping two nights in the train, direct from Padua to London. The first night would be between Padua and Milan, the next in the train crossing France from Basle.

This simple programme, however, was not destined to be carried out, for a cause which it had never entered into my head to conceive possible. We started out from Milan, as we had intended, for the Swiss frontier. But when we reached the last Italian halt, and turned out to be put through the customs inspection, our passports were duly inspected and declared to be insufficient to permit us to quit Italy. I was informed by the polite and apologetic chief official in the passport department that, by a Government regulation imposed during the last few days, everyone crossing the frontier had to display not merely his passport, but a *permesso* from the Prefect of the last town in which he had spent a night, vouching for his respectability, and giving details as to his stay and a permission to leave Italy. The ostensible reason for this formality was that dangerous foreign anarchists, implicated in the recent outrages at Milan and elsewhere, were trying to escape from the country. I pointed out, with some indignation, that an English Conservative member of Parliament was not likely to be a dangerous anarchist, and that my photograph was on my passport. I then, rather unwisely as it turned out, remarked that in the last town where I had slept a night the Prefect was not at all in a position to grant *permessi*, since he was being beset in his palace by Communist mobs and had other things to think about;

nor, indeed, could foreigners get to him. With much shrugging of shoulders and regret, the official assured me that it was as much as his place was worth to violate a new governmental edict, just sent to him, with special orders that it must be carried out with absolute rigour. The only thing that he could suggest was that I should go back to Milan, where order was now restored, stay there a night, and get a *permesso* to-morrow. This would have lost me two days on my return journey, if one allowed for a double journey to and from Milan, and a good many hours for getting the document through the Prefect's office.

I stood back, much vexed at the prospect of such a waste of time, but seeing no other way out of the matter, when an Italian officer who had been listening to the conversation drew me aside. 'Don't you go to the trouble of getting all the way back to Milan,' he said. 'I can give you a tip that will put all right in three hours or so. The Prefect in the big town which you have just passed is a very good friend of mine, and a stanch Anglophil—he will give you a *permesso* without the least difficulty, to oblige an English member of Parliament. Take an automobile—there are several waiting here, and you can get to him in less than an hour.' I thanked the officer very much—he told me that he was on special duty at the frontier himself for the moment, and knew all the ropes: altogether he was most helpful and friendly.

So I and my son got a car, and ran back not so very many miles, and drew up before the Prefect's official residence. I sent in my card, with a line on it to say that I had to be in Parliament without loss of time, and craved an audience, to ask to have my passport put right. After some delay the servant came back, saying that the Prefect was not at home, but that his

lady would like to see me. So I left my son outside, and went up a broad flight of stairs to the large drawing-room. Here I found two very charming ladies, the Prefect's wife and sister-in-law, to whom I explained my woes, and expatiated on the duty of an English deputy to get home to the House of Commons when a crisis was on. Now the Prefect was, most unfortunately, out for a day's shooting in the mountains, which seemed to put a stopper on the plan that the friendly officer at the frontier station had suggested to me. But, to my intense surprise, the ladies did not see it that way. They told me that His Excellency would undoubtedly have put everything right if he had been at home, so that they did not see why it should not be managed in his absence—he would not object. Accordingly they rang up the Chief of the Police on the telephone, and he turned up almost immediately—his office being not far off. He was a Neapolitan, and we had a talk about the beauties of Naples, and other things, in very pleasant fashion. Now the frontier-passing *permessi* were on the Prefect's desk in his study: the Chief of the Police fetched them up, and with them the Prefect's official hand-stamp.

I was asked to fill in my own and my son's full names and status—I went down as 'deputato alla Camera dei Comuni', and he as 'studente'—and then the courteous official wrote a statement, in the proper place, that we had been staying for the last two nights at the Hotel Metropole hard by. He then stamped the documents with the Prefect's seal in purple ink, and added his own signature. I ventured to object, with all humility, that I had told the officials at the frontier that the last place I had slept in was Venice, which was all in an uproar, and that this did not seem quite to fit in with the new certificate. 'They will not

make the least difficulty,' he said; 'all they want is a proper *permesso*, and this is one. They would not like to get into trouble with the Prefect, or indeed with me, for refusing anything that we sent them. You may be quite certain that all will be right.'

This seemed reassuring, though I had a dim vision of some local Cato at the frontier, who might insist on raising trouble, and accusing us of being international agents who had forged an official document. I was quite wrong: when we had made the most effusive acknowledgments of our thanks to the kind ladies and the resourceful Chief of the Police, we went back to the frontier, and reached it (I should think) in about five hours from the moment at which we had been refused exit in the morning. We had, of course, missed all connections by the delay, but there were still means of getting into Switzerland in time for dinner. When, with a little trepidation, I presented the *permissi* to the passport official, he displayed a broad grin and seemed highly amused. 'Why, I thought your last sleeping-place was Venice,' he said, 'and now I see you have been sleeping but twenty kilometres away for some days. However, the *permessi* are all right now, and you can pass the iron bars and stop in the waiting-room till you can get off.' He was much too big an official to 'tip', or I should much have liked to do so, for he was obviously a humorous person.

That night we dined and slept inside Switzerland, and caught the St. Gotthard train in the morning. Thus I was only delayed one day by the Government's new, and most ineffective, plan for catching foreign anarchists at the frontier. The great impression left on me was the all-importance of official forms to properly constituted officials. Provided that the document bore the necessary stamps, it did not matter in the least

what was its relation to mere actual facts. Obviously I had been most unwise to volunteer the statement that my last halt had been at Venice; but the mere proffering of information that turned out to be inconsistent with my subsequent account of myself had no deleterious effect, when once I could show a stamped and signed document which gave me leave to pass the frontier. Possibly I might have been treated with less affability if my son and I had presented the aspect of bearded and sinister Bolsheviks, but we obviously did not, and I think that everyone concerned was wishful to oblige a stranded British member of Parliament—whatever official edicts might say.

I have been down to Italy four or five times since these curious experiences of 1921, and cannot too strongly emphasize the difference of condition which it now presents. No closed galleries, no unpunctual trains, no dilapidated public offices, and (I may add) no undignified haggle with a taxi-driver, a guide, or a minor official, whenever one wishes to do something out of the ordinary. The old walled towns have burst their insanitary *enceintes*, and have thrown out garden cities; the roads are everywhere in excellent order, and all old travel difficulties have been solved by an all-embracing scheme of cross-country motor omnibuses, which are as frequent in Tuscany as in Oxfordshire. The only criticism which I can make on them is that all Italian motor-drivers seem to have learnt their trade while urging military machines up impossible slopes in the Alps during the War. Their pace among precipices is a little terrifying, to those who know only the comparatively mild gradients of Great Britain. The local museums, where often the moth and rust did corrupt, and occasionally unscrupulous officials disposed of national property, are all swept and garnished

and run by enthusiasts. I shall never forget the contrast between one large town museum, which I visited in 1930 and found admirably conducted, and that same museum in 1909, when (despite of a letter from the Minister of Instruction) I was excluded from certain departments, because the curator had been found making away with important objects to foreign dealers. The rooms were sealed up, while experts from Rome were verifying what was, and what was not, left in the cases. This was by no means a unique phenomenon under the *ancien régime*.

On one of my earlier visits to Italy since the victory of the Fascisti, I was fortunate enough to witness Mussolini's triumphant entry into Rome, with ten aeroplanes hovering over his car, in imitation of the ten eagles of Romulus. I heard him deliver a speech in his usual manner from a balcony at the corner of the Piazza Colonna, to an innumerable crowd of his votaries. His voice carried wonderfully, and waves of emotion swept over the multitude as each phrase went home. This was on April 10, 1924.

Oddly enough, I happened to be in Rome again in 1926, on the day (April 7th) when the Dictator was shot at by a mad Irish lady, Miss Gibson, the sister of Lord Ashbourne. Fortunately, his nose was but slightly grazed, and no further harm done, but I never saw a city so excited as Rome when the news of this attempt went round. The whole of the main streets were covered with rushing cars and lorries, crowded by Fascisti shouting and brandishing rifles or revolvers. If there had been anyone to attack, the enemy would have been torn to pieces; but the assailant was a woman, obviously distraught in mind, and not connected with any Italian malcontents, as far as could be made out, being an Irish 'patriot' of the Sinn Fein



sort. The whole excited multitude, after driving past the *Duce's* dwelling and shouting their congratulations, seemed to scud down the Corso and into the Piazza del Popolo as a sort of circular tour, and ended by wrecking the offices of two Republican papers. Knowing the antecedents of this insane rebel Irishwoman, I hastened to put the sub-editor of a newspaper, whom I chanced to know, in possession of them, in order that the rumour that Mussolini had been shot at by an Englishwoman might be contradicted. Not only was she not English, but she was anti-English. It was a great relief to see in next morning's papers that she was duly described as a 'pazza Irlandesa', and not as British. A false impression concerning her personality might have done international harm for the moment, as one could see at once from the temper of the angry crowd of Fascisti.

I am perpetually being inundated by tracts published by people who call themselves the 'friends of Italy', and are inspired by exiled Italian Liberals, containing indictments of Mussolini's régime in general and of certain acts of repression (or oppression) in particular. I can quite understand the mentality of the writers, and appreciate their indignation. But I was down in Italy in 1921, in the middle of the struggle, and I have been there five times since the struggle was ended. The contrast in the condition of the country speaks for itself. I will not fall in with Pope's

Whate'er is best administered is best,

but I have the gravest doubts whether there is any justification for injuring a machine that is working, because it is not ideally perfect, when one remembers what was going on before that machine was invented.

## INDEX

- Abdy, Lady, her taste for jewellery, and Mr. Belt's fraud, 70-1
- Abdy, Sir William, his successful litigation against Richard Belt, 71-2
- Air raids in London, experiences of, 235-6
- All Souls College, and Mr. Gladstone, 76-8
- Amelia*, yacht, unlucky voyage of the, 212-13
- Annunzio, Gabriele de, his lawless acts at Fiume, 261
- Anson, Sir William, introduces Mr. Gladstone to All Souls, 77-8
- Arzadun, General, ominous interview with, 156-7
- Austria, and the opening of the Great War, 218
- Avenida, in Lisbon, fighting in the, 193, 199-200
- Azevedo de Castello Branco, Portuguese minister, converse with, 179, 184
- Basle, old civil wars in, 103
- Bavaria, discontent in, with the Prussian régime, 43; overburdened by its two mad kings, 45
- Bazaine, Marshal, his disastrous generalship, 19-20
- Belgium, condition of, in 1919, 243-4
- Bellinzona, experiences in a revolution at, 105-10
- Belt, Richard Claude, his career, 57-8; his litigation with Charles Lawes, 60-7; prosecuted and imprisoned for defrauding Sir William Abdy, 70-2
- Bensberg, a memory from, 255
- Berlin, changes in, from 1890 to 1910, 47
- Bethmann-Hollweg, German Chancellor, a glimpse of, 49
- Birkenhead, Lord, in Whitehall, 221
- Bismarck, Prince, a glimpse of, at Frankfort, 33
- 'Blue Book', compilation of, on War Origins, 239
- Bombarda, Dr. Miguel, his murder by a lunatic, 184
- Botelho, Captain, accompanies the author in Central Portugal, 182
- Botelho, General Raposo, Portuguese War Minister, interviews with, 177; his collapse during the Revolution, 198, 205
- Boulanger, General, his career, 119

- Braga, Theophilo, first president of the Portuguese Republic, 206
- Browning, Robert, memories of, at Oxford, 75
- Brunswick, Duchy of, given to the last Duke of Cumberland, 47
- Buicca, assassin of Carlos King of Portugal, 173
- Bull-fight at Madrid, an abnormal variety, 152-4
- Burrows, Montagu, his interview with Mr. Gladstone, 82
- Bussaco, historic celebrations at, in 1910, 180-3
- Carbonarios, secret society in Portugal, 172
- Casement, Sir Roger, his trial for treason, 231; incidents at, 233
- Castioni, Ticinese revolutionist, takes refuge in London, 115
- Casualties, German, supervision of, in Whitehall, 234-5
- 'Chose', M., his strange dealings with tickets, 124-5
- Christopher, Canon, surprises Mr. Gladstone, 90-1
- Cobden, Richard, Mr. Gladstone's admiration of, 83
- Collins, Martin, his evidence at Casement trial, 233
- Cologne, the British occupation of, 244-50
- Commune, the Paris, of 1871, 11, 22
- Communiqué* of the battle of the Marne, composition of, 223-4
- Communists, the Italian, 262; their demonstrations, 272
- Cook, Sir Edward, at the Press Bureau, 221
- Coronation banquets at Westminster, notice of, 54-5
- Couceiro, Captain Paiva, his exploits in Lisbon, 201-2; leads raids against the Republic, 215
- Cumberland, the Dukes of, Kings of Hanover, 36, 38, 47
- Currency, difficulties with, during and after the War, 247-8
- Da Costa, General, interview with, at Bussaco, 179
- 'Diana', outrage at the Milan Theatre, 263
- Dicey, Professor Albert, and Mr. Gladstone, 78, 82
- Dickens, Charles, memory of the death of, 17
- 'Dorking—the Battle of', memories of, 19
- Dreyfus Trial, the, 119
- Egyptian Archaeology, Mr. Gladstone's lecture on, 89-90
- Einkreisung*, German ideas about, 49-50
- Ericeira, King Manuel at, 211-12
- Ernest, King of Hanover, 36
- Eton, Mr. Gladstone's memories of, 92
- Eugénie, the Empress, a

- glimpse of, in 1868, 13; her long exile, 14
- Fairs, French, attractiveness of, 9
- Fascisti: first meeting with, 263; their organization and views, 270-1; their later efforts, 273, 282
- Fletcher, C. R. L., his book on Gladstone at Oxford, 74
- Foreign Office, two years' work at, 235-7
- Formiga Branca*, secret society in Portugal, 173-4
- Foz de Arouce, memories of, 183
- Franco, João, Portuguese dictator, 170, 214
- Frankfort, its detestation of Prussian rule, 30-1; memories of a ceremony at, 33
- 'Fraternization', the edict against, at Cologne, 249-50
- Franz Ferdinand, Archduke, his murder, 218
- Frederic, German Emperor, memories of, 25-6
- George V, King of Hanover, 36-7
- George, Mr. Lloyd, memories of a speech of his, 258
- Gibson, Miss, shoots at Mussolini, 283
- Giffard, Hardinge (Lord Halsbury), his defence of Richard Belt, 61, 66
- Giolitti, Italian prime minister, 261
- Gladstone, Mrs., her curtailed visit to Oxford, 86
- Gladstone, W. E., elected an Honorary Fellow of All Souls, 76; his rupture with Oxford University, 77; proposes a visit to All Souls, 78; his reception by the college, 80; his table talk, 82-3, and lectures, 89-90; general conclusions about him, 96-7
- Gorgão, Portuguese General, mismanages the Lisbon revolution, 200, 205, 206
- Guardia Civil*, the Spanish, merits of, 141
- Guelf party, the, in the German Reichstag, 38-9
- Haldane, General Sir Aylmer, my host at Cologne, 240
- Hall, Admiral, and the affair of the Dutch spy, 225
- Hanover, hatred of the Prussians in, 34; reminiscences of, 40
- Henson, H. H., his colloquies with Mr. Gladstone, 87
- Herrenhausen, loyalist pilgrimages of Hanoverians to, 39
- Homer, Mr. Gladstone's lecture on, 89
- Hudlestone, Mr. Justice, his management of the Belt-Lawes trial, 61, 66-7
- Imperial Guard, the, of Napoleon III, 10
- India, Family Traditions of, 2
- Jellicoe, Lord, at the Battle of Jutland, 227; his telegram on the battle, 229

Journalists, mentality of, in war-time, 222, 229

Jutland, Battle of, false rumours about, in London, 228

Kitchener, Herbert Lord, his deplorable end, 230

Künzli, Colonel, High Commissioner at Bellinzona, 113-14

Lang, Cosmo (afterwards Archbishop), his colloquies with Mr. Gladstone, 87

Langensalza, Battle of, 37

Law Courts, the new, in the Strand, opened, 55

Lawes, Charles, sculptor, his early career, 58; his unsuccessful litigation with Richard Belt, 60-8; his later years, 72-3

Lisbon, the revolution at, in 1910, 190-200

Loubet, President, at the Reims Review, 131

Louis II, King of Bavaria, his eccentricities, 43-4; and suicide, 45

Luitpold, Prince Regent of Bavaria, 45

Madrid, an abortive insurrection at, 147-51

Mafra, King Manuel at, 210-11  
'Mano Negra', Spanish secret society, 141

Mantua, state of, in 1921, 264

Manuel II, King of Portugal, his accession, 166; his character, 170-1; his celebrations

at Bussaco, 179-81; returns to Lisbon, 184; bombarded by the insurgent fleet, 197; his flight to Mafra, 210, and to Gibraltar, 213; his after career, 215

Marne, the *communiqué* on the Battle of the, written by C. O., 223-4

Milan, in 1921, 262; Communist outrages and Fascist outbreak at, 263-4

Milreis, depreciation of the, 214

Moltke, Field-Marshal, a glimpse of, at Frankfort, 33  
'Murphy, Mrs.', a fictitious character invented by Richard Belt, 70

Mussolini, Benito, unknown in England before 1921, 260; early record of, 271; organized the Fascists, 273; his triumphal entry into Rome, 283; attempted assassination of, by Miss Gibson, 283

Napoleon III, British impressions of, 11-12; a glimpse of him in 1868, 13

Necessidades Palace, the, at Lisbon, King Manuel bombarded in, 197

Newman, J. H., Cardinal, Mr. Gladstone's views on, 93

Nicholas II, Czar of Russia, a glimpse of him at the Reims Review, 131

Northcliffe, Lord, denounced by Mr. Lloyd George, 258

- Oporto, the Duke of, in the Portuguese Revolution, 210-11
- Otto, the idiot King of Bavaria, 45
- Oxford, Mr. Gladstone at, 80-90; his views on costumes at, 85, and on innovations, 86
- Padua, state of, in 1921, 264
- Pelham, Professor Henry, and Mr. Gladstone, 89
- Permessi*, difficulty over, during the Italian civil troubles, 278-81
- Plumer, Lord, at Cologne, 254, 256
- Portugal, geography of, and modern political history of, 163-5; in revolution, 186-96
- Press Bureau, 'three years' work at the, 221-34
- Primo de Rivera, dictator in Spain, 158
- 'Progressive' party, the, in Portugal, 169
- Prohibition, an American colonel's views on, 255
- Pronunciamientos*, the Spanish custom of, 140, 142
- Prothero, George, meeting with, at Cologne, 256
- Reading, Lord, presides at the Casement Trial, 234
- Redinha, curious discovery of British cannon balls at, 183
- 'Regenerator' party, the, in Portugal, 169-70
- Reims, the Great Review at, in 1901, for the Czar, 128-35
- Reis, Candido, Admiral, heads the Portuguese rebellion, 186, and commits suicide, 194
- Reynolds, Rafael, companion of my travels in Portugal, 177, 182
- Rhineland, British occupation of the, 245, 250, 253
- Rome, incidents in, connected with Mussolini, 283
- Rossi, Swiss politician, assassinated, 110
- 'Rotativist' system, the Portuguese, 169-70
- Ruskin, John, memories of, at Oxford, 75
- St. Brandan's Well, superstition concerning, 233
- St. Cloud, the ruins of, 23
- St. Gotthard Railway, its political effects, 107, 113
- St. Sebastian, royal ceremony at, 157
- Salamanca, revolutionary outbreak at, 154-5
- Santos, Machado, Portuguese revolutionist, his exploits, 192, 194; killed in a civil war, 215
- Sayce, Professor, Mr. Gladstone on, 89
- Shakespeare, tercentenary of, 8
- Simon, Sir John, 220
- Smith, Harold, at the Press Bureau, 223
- Sonderbund War, the Swiss, 103
- Stephen, Mr. Justice, tries Belt, 69, 71

- Swettenham, Sir F., at the Press Bureau, 221
- Swinton, General Sir E., 'Eyewitness' in 1914, 222
- Swiss mercenaries, the, in Europe, 101
- Switzerland, constitutional history of, 99, 102; civil war in, 103
- Syren, strange talk with the, 226
- Teixeira de Sousa, Portuguese Prime Minister, 173-4; fails against the Republicans, 196, 198, 205
- Ticino, Canton, civil war in, 105-10
- Torres Vedras, the lines of, visited, 183
- Trench, F., and Mr. Gladstone's claret, 88
- Trier, the French occupation of, in 1919, 253-4
- Tuileries, the, ancient glories of, 11; its ruins visited, 23
- Union, Society, the Oxford, Mr. Gladstone's lecture at, 89-90
- 'Vandenbosch', a Dutch double-spy in 1916, 225
- Venice, William II at, 48; state of, in 1919, 266; general strike and civil war in, April 1919, 267-70
- Verheyden, T., pupil and enemy of Belt, 61-2; his evidence at Belt's trial, 65
- Victoria Queen of Spain, at the San Sebastian ceremonies, 157
- Wellington, Henry Arthur, Duke of, at the Bussaco celebrations, 178, 181
- Westminster Hall, ancient history of, 51-3; the last trial in, 56
- Whitehall, four years' work in, 220-37
- William I, German Emperor, a glimpse of, at Frankfort, 32-3
- William II, idiosyncrasies of, 25; at Venice and Jerusalem, 48; his fall 238-9
- Yugoslav ministers, dealings with the, 235
- Zurich, civil wars of, 103

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